

PERSON OF THE YEAR

Maisie B. Tenorio

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Imagine a young girl, learning of the death of her beloved aunt at the hands of an abusive husband. That was the reality of Maisie B. Tenorio, who learned at a young age the devastating truth of domestic violence and sexual abuse.

“My mom’s sister was murdered by her husband. I was very close to her, and she was like a second mom to me. That has impacted me my whole life so I feel very strongly about all the issues—domestic violence, teen dating violence, sexual assault, stalking,” she said.
That loss and the hole that’s been left in her heart have led Tenorio to dedicate her life to

advocating against such treatment of women and men across the CNMI in hopes of a generation where women and men no longer fear domestic violence and sexual abuse, and no longer fear judgment for their past.
Today, Tenorio has helped many women,
See TENORIO on Page 4



Maisie B. Tenorio, one of the founding members and the current executive director of the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, poses for the *Saipan Tribune*.
KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Shirley's Coffee Shop

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

It may be a transplant from neighboring Guam, but in the more than two decades it has sated Saipan’s considerable appetite, Shirley’s Coffee Shop has also become Saipan’s de facto restaurant for comfort food. Which is why *Saipan Tribune* has chosen to name the establishment, which has two locations on Saipan—Susupe and Garapan—as its Small Business of the Year for 2019.
See SHIRLEY’S on Page 4

The Shirley’s Coffee Shop in Susupe offers spacious parking for its many loyal customers.
MARK RABAGO

MORE THAN A YEAR AFTER YUTU

Where are we now?

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Super Typhoon Yutu hit the CNMI on Oct. 25-26, 2018. More than a year after, here is a quick look at where we are now:

- 6,968: Approved applications for individual assistance, totaling \$40.5 million
 - \$97.4 million: Small Business Association loans
 - 546: Temporary roofs installed
- See WHERE on Page 5**

FEMA
■ \$131 million: Federal funding for Public Assistance Projects

NOTICE
There will be no issue of the *Saipan Tribune* on Jan. 1 and 2, 2020.

Top Stories of 2019. PAGE 2
Cop allegedly catches ex-convict naked inside car. PAGE 7

INSIDE



BUSINESS
Hyatt Regency Saipan surprises five beneficiaries with donations of over \$10,000.

PAGE 14



NATION
There were more mass killings in 2019 than any year dating back to at least the 1970s.

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ASIA
North Korea’s Kim Jong Un called for his military to protect the country’s security.

PAGE 17



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Wishing you a year filled with prosperity,
joy, and contentment.



Happy New Year!

From the management and staff of McDonald's Saipan

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Local

LEADING STORIES OF 2019

FBI raid

The Federal Bureau of Investigation cast a dragnet across Saipan on Nov. 7, 2019, dispatching agents that executed several search warrants to look for evidence of possible fraud, money laundering, and other federal violations. The searches, executed through Nov. 8, 2019, targeted offices such as the Governor's Office; Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' house; an office of casino operator Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC; the office of Alfred Yue of Marianas Consultancy Services LLC,

a consultant for the casino; Legend Realty Saipan; and the Torres Brothers' law office.

Federal search warrants as well as seizure reports were filed and leaked, but were later sealed by the CNMI District Courts. *(Erwin Encinares)*

Skymark touchdown

A Skymark Airlines Inc. Boeing 737-800 plane carrying 177 passengers, including Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Skymark president and representative director Masahiko Ichie, touched down at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport last Nov. 29 for its inaugural non-stop daily regular direct

Continued on Next Page

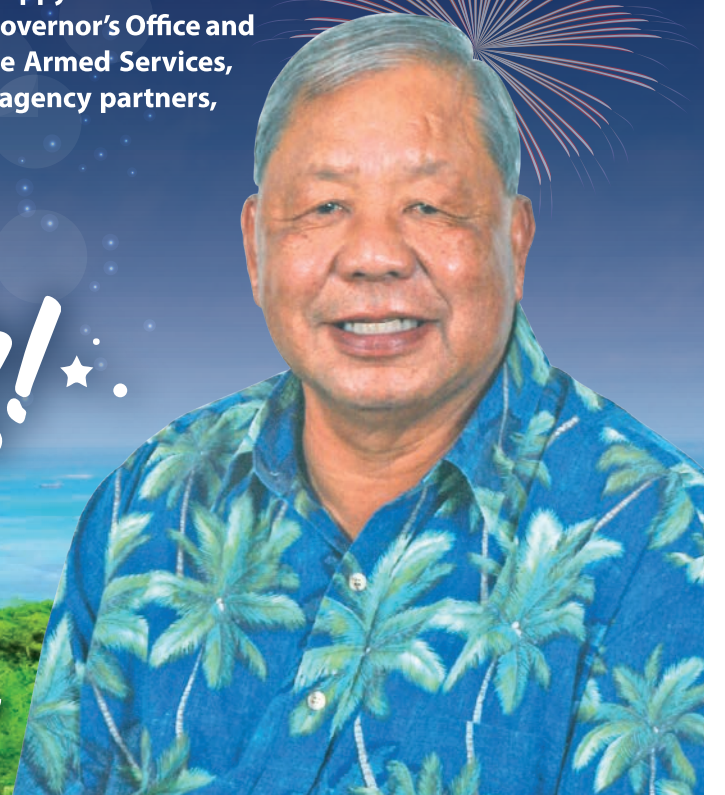


Entering the new year 2020, we reflect on the journey of challenges and progress 2019 has taken us on. As we welcome and celebrate the New Year, we must hope for continued solidarity, peace, understanding, respect, and acceptance. In order for us to create a better and stronger community, together we must allow for a forward-thinking perspective, compromising along the way, and in the end, respect and accept the outcome. Our collective success depends on our shared common goals and objectives, which is to make our CNMI a safe and healthy place to live, raise a family, and pursue our dreams of moving forward. May this year bring new happiness, new goals, new achievements and a lot of new inspirations on your life. We wish that every day of the new year be filled with success, happiness and prosperity for you and your family. In hindsight, our disagreements and agreements have been the foundation of our solidarity and growth. This New Year as in past years, we extend our hand to everyone to continue our pursuit of growth, prosperity, forgiveness, and generosity.

Along with our staff and the people of Saipan, we want to wish a joyous and happy New Year to our families and friends living here and abroad. We also wish our partners, the CNMI Governor's Office and other CNMI government agencies, all the men and women serving abroad in the Armed Services, the United States Army National Guard, the U.S. Army Reserve, and our federal agency partners, and many others,

Happy New Year!

DAVID MUNDO APATANG
MAYOR OF SAIPAN & STAFF



From Page 2

flight from Tokyo to Japan.

Prior to that, Skymark flew a charter plane to Saipan on March 22, making it the first Japanese carrier to fly directly to Saipan since Japan Airlines withdrew from the CNMI in 2005. **(Ferdie de la Torre)**

Deaths and unsolved cases

The turn of the year could have very well foreshadowed what 2019 would be with the death of 22-year old Akiyama Eiki, who drowned in the waters off Bird Island on Jan. 1, 2019.

Shortly after, on Jan. 4, Aurelio del Prado, 74, died after being hit by a car as he was crossing the street across Joeten Dandan. Nine months later, on Oct. 26, a car drove off Banzai Cliff; a body has yet to be found. A car collision on Dec. 16, killed Sergio Apostol, who later succumbed at the hospital to multiple injuries.

On March 23, police found a decomposing body in Kagman, the cause of death was determined to be cardiac arrest. On April 5, two police officers patrolling Chalan Kanoa's district 4 noticed an unresponsive man under a concrete bench. He was brought to the hospital and pronounced dead.

On May 13, a man found lying unresponsive by the side of the road near Dandan Middle School was declared dead, of natural causes.

On May 28, police officers came upon an unconscious Dong Pabalinas along Beach Road. He was immediately brought to the Commonwealth Health Center where he was pronounced dead.

On Aug. 13, an elderly woman was found dead in a home in Finasisu, with her body in an advanced stage of decomposition. Death was blamed on natural causes. On Nov. 25, a decomposing body of a still unidentified person was found by two hikers in the outer cove of Bird Island.

On Nov. 12, an inmate of the Department of Corrections prison in Susupe was found dead, with unofficial reports claiming that he hung himself.

On Dec. 13, two women, Li Na Lim, 42, and Linhua Cui, 54, were found dead inside Rice Cake Best Food Restaurant in San Antonio. The women were shot. **(Iva Maurin)**

Government austerity

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres signed Directive 2019-004 on May 30, 2019, effectively implementing a 72-hour bi-weekly work schedule beginning June 23, 2019, as

the government prioritized recovery efforts in the wake of Super Typhoon Yutu.

On Nov. 14, 2019, Torres issued Directive 2020-001, stating that effective Nov. 24, 2019, the regular 80-hour bi-weekly work schedules would be restored, exactly five months after. **(Erwin Encinares)**

14 days for Chinese tourists

Effective Oct. 3, 2019, the length of time that Chinese tourists are allowed to stay in the CNMI was cut from 45 days to just 14 days instead.

The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands later said that most Chinese tourists stay only for three to five days in the CNMI and that they were fine with the regulation changes.

Back in 2009, when the Chinese and Russian tourists got the green light to visit the CNMI without a pre-approved U.S. visa, they were allowed to stay for a maximum of 45 days. **(Erwin Encinares)**

Cannabis regulations

The Commonwealth Cannabis Commission was created in early September 2019, setting off the 180-day clock for the commission to come up with homegrown regulations for those who wish to plant cannabis; commercial regulations for those who are looking to get into the cannabis industry in the CNMI; and the medicinal regulations that allows the health care industry to take advantage of the health benefits of cannabis. According to commission chair Nadine Deleon Guerrero in early December 2019, they are already half-way done with the regulations. **(Erwin Encinares)**

Still no regs

Public Law 116-24, previously known as H.R. 559, was enacted June 26, 2019, providing CNMI-only residence for an estimated 1,039 humanitarian parolees. The legislation also mandates U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to come up with regulations 180 days after H.R. 559's enactment.

USCIS has yet to publish their regulations for the new legislation, despite a Dec. 23, 2019, deadline. **(Erwin Encinares)**

End of visa-free entry for Russian tourists

Effective last Oct. 3, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security stopped the entry of Russian tourists to the CNMI and Guam without first obtaining a U.S. visa. The federal government's sudden decision took the Marianas Visitors Authority by surprise. MVA board chair Mar-

ian Aldan-Pierce sees it as the loss of thousands of dollars for the CNMI's economy almost overnight. The CNMI had sought to grow the Russian market starting in 2005. **(Ferdie de la Torre)**

Imperial Pacific sues CCC

Last June, Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC sued the Commonwealth Casino Commission to prohibit CCC from releasing information in their audited financial reports that they believe is confidential.

The dispute arises from the Open Government Act request filed with CCC by Rep. Edwin K. Propst (Ind-

Saipan) on June 13, 2019.

Last Aug. 26, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit denied IPI's motion to stay or suspend the U.S. District Court for the NMI's preliminary injunction order that allowed CCC to disclose IPI's confidential income tax information that is subject of a legal dispute. IPI and its two subsidiaries, and CCC eventually agreed to dismiss all their court actions in federal court. **(Ferdie de la Torre)**

Dengue fever in the Marianas

The Pacific Epidemic and Emerging Disease Alert con-

firmed the presence of dengue fever in the Marianas in November. The red alert was changed to a blue alert as of Nov. 26, which means the chance of an epidemic in the region, is decreasing. The last reported case of dengue fever in the Marianas region was last Nov. 11.

CHCC got its first case of dengue back in August from a patient who returned from an off-island trip and contracted the disease in Palau. Their second case was seen in early September with another patient who also returned from Palau.

Although there is a vaccine for dengue fever, it has only

been approved for those who have already been infected with dengue. **(Kimberly A. Bautista)**

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Cop allegedly catches ex-convict naked inside car

A man who had just been convicted of domestic violence was arrested last Friday, this time over an incident in October when he allegedly assaulted a police officer who had caught him naked inside a car parked at the Garapan Fishing Base.

Berman Higgins Jr., 21, was served with an arrest warrant on charges of assault and battery and disturbing the peace.

At a hearing yesterday, Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo imposed a \$3,000 cash bail on Higgins and set the preliminary hearing for Feb. 10 at 9am.

Chief Public Defender Douglas

Hartig was appointed as counsel for Higgins.

According to police detective Shannon Dela Cruz in her report, a police officer was conducting an hourly check at the Garapan Fishing Base last Oct. 5 at 3:03am when he came across a white car with its lights on and parked at the far corner near the small war bunker. The officer got down his patrol car, turned on his flashlight, pointed it toward the driver's side window, and knocked on the window to ask if everything was fine. That's when the officer saw a naked man, later identified as Higgins, putting on his

boxer briefs and short pants.

The officer knocked on the car's window a second time. Higgins came out of the car, slammed his door, and allegedly yelled at the officer if he has a problem with him having sex. He then allegedly challenged the officer to a fight. The police report did not identify who was in the car with Higgins.

The officer radioed for additional officers for assistance. Higgins got back into his car, drove it around and seemed headed toward the officer. The officer went to the side of his patrol car. As Higgins came to a stop, his tires skidded on the gravel road.

Higgins then got down his car and walked toward the officer. Other officers arrived, grabbed Higgins, and placed him in handcuffs.

The officer who first encountered Higgins then brought him to the Commonwealth Health Center for medical clearance. At CHC's waiting room, Higgins again allegedly challenged the officer to fight and shoot him. When Higgins attempted to walk out of the waiting room, the officer pulled him back to the room. That's when Higgins allegedly kicked the officer on the chest and stomach. The officer held Higgins in a headlock to secure him.

Higgins kned the officer in the crotch and repeatedly kicked him. A male hospital staff, who heard the commotion in the room, came and helped the officer secure Higgins.

Last Dec. 10, Higgins pleaded guilty to assault and battery (domestic violence) and was sentenced by Superior Court Associate Judge Teresa K. Kim-Tenorio to 20 days in prison, with credit for the time he already served in jail. He was placed on probation for three years.

In that case that happened on Dec. 23, 2018, on Saipan, Higgins punched a "household member" in the face, fracturing her right orbital bone and loosening at least one tooth. **(Ferdie de la Torre)**

SHIRLEY'S

From Page 1

Shirley's Coffee Shop was founded in Guam in 1983 by the restaurant's iconic namesake, Shirley Lai. Ten years later, the family-style casual dining restaurant reached Saipan's shores with the opening of the Chalan Laulau branch in 1993.

Remembering it like it was just yesterday, Shirley's Coffee Shop part-owner Susan Macario said there was palpable excitement in the air leading up to the time when the restaurant opened on Saipan 26 years ago.

"Right after we put up the sign that says 'Shirley's Coffee Shop, Opening Soon,' Saipan residents would stop by to check on the renovations. [Everyone] were excited to know when the exact opening date will be and that there will finally be a Shirley's Coffee Shop on Saipan. Some were even taking photos with the 'Opening Soon' banner. It gave us a feel of how our opening will be met by the community."

She said Shirley's Coffee Shop's advantage was it already built a very good name and was already known for its good food in the U.S. territory.

"It was not all that difficult convincing them to try out our restaurant on Saipan. In fact, we were well-received even before the store opened and the excitement for the opening was felt. We remember setting up long tables weekly for guests who quickly became repeat customers shortly after opening. Amazingly, people who dined for breakfast will be back for lunch or dinner," said Macario.

She said fried rice was already a favorite then.

While it's undoubtedly the go-to-place for what comes closest as



Saipan soul food nowadays, Shirley's Coffee Shop went through a lot of challenges when it started.

"Like any other business, we also had birthing pains during the opening. Even before we served our first meal, there were a thousand details we needed to give attention to," Macario recalled.

While everyone was on a high during Shirley's Coffee Shop's opening, thanks to the community's warm reception, the nitty-gritty of reality soon hit the pioneering group of five cooks and eight waitstaff and they experienced problems like inventory and supply.

"Our goal has always been to ensure customers are only served freshly-prepared food and ingredients, so it was a big challenge. Operation-wise we had to ensure we live up to the kind of service Guam was known

for—to create that perfect family-friendly restaurant people will keep coming back to."

The first year of Shirley's Coffee Shop operations could be summed as fruitful and was the year where its special half chicken and short ribs quickly joined fried rice as the restaurant's staples.

In hindsight, there was really no magic formula to the restaurant's success, Macario said.

"Shirley's Coffee Shop is here because of the hard work of the staff, the legacy of Mama Shirley's that we work so hard to uphold every day and our sincerest desire to offer delicious, home-cooked meals at affordable prices to our guests. As our guests would say from the start, 'Shirley's is our kitchen.'"

It helped that they also hired people who have the passion to make cus-

tomers happy. "I believe that all the preparations that we do in the planning stage, we will not be a success if we do not take care of our employees and give them a healthy working environment," she added.

Shirley's Coffee Shop has also become a trailblazer of sorts with decisions like making its restaurants smoke-free, then characterized as risky at the time of implementation.

"Some of what we introduced were unpopular and unheard of at that time. Shirley's was one of the first to introduce a smoke-free place. That time, customers go to a breakfast place to smoke and drink coffee but it was affecting our customers and employees' health. Our sales dipped for awhile, but thankfully our loyal customers saw the benefit and started coming back," said Macario.

Shirley's Coffee Shop has also become a favorite not only of locals but also of tourists visiting Saipan.

"Over the years Shirley's Coffee Shop has continued to evolve while keeping what our customers love about us. We understand our island started and continues to be a destination for Koreans and Chinese so slowly, we have introduced food that catered to their tastes. We have also become more visible to that market by advertising in a Korean newspaper," she said.

Macario thinks the biggest factor in many tourists now choosing to dine at Shirley's Coffee Shop is the feeling of warmth they receive from the restaurant's staff and the home-cooked meals prepared for them.

"At Shirley's, the food might be a bit different from what they have at home, but the warm smiles and friendly service is something you look for anywhere you go," she said.

Recently, Shirley's Coffee Shop joined the Department of Public Health's BIBA Healthy Program, a departure for a restaurant previously known for large portions of tried-and-tested comfort food.

"Joining was a great opportunity for us to offer a healthy selection for our customers. What's great about the program is that the recipes we proposed were pre-approved by local dietitians. This saves the customer the stress of requesting less mayo, less salt, less this or that. It brought it down to a balance of calories, fat, etc., basically making a healthy choice an easy one," said Macario.

For the future, Shirley's Coffee Shop sets its sights in further improving customer service and make better its overall dining experience. "We are also planning to expand Shirley's Susupe or hopefully open another branch," she added.

TENORIO

From Page 1

men, and children through her advocacy efforts and in her role as a founding member of the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.

The coalition, which was founded back in 2005 but was officially incorporated in March 2007, has a mission to promote, nourish, and sustain a collective movement against violence in the CNMI.

"It doesn't matter who you are,

what you know, your educational background, what church you go to, any of these things can happen to anyone," she said.

The subject of domestic violence is not glamorous nor is it a glitzy advocacy that draws much attention, yet the act of bringing the subject to the forefront of public consciousness, which the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence is doing, is like shining the light of the sun on an infection that festers and grows in the dark, and many of the men, women, and children that are caught in its

clutches sometimes feel like voiceless victims that are drowning from public apathy.

That's where the coalition comes in, Tenorio said. The ultimate goal is to provide a safe place for victims to come and ask for help, or even just talk about what their traumatic experience is like and know that they are heard, loved, and supported.

"I think that's something that fuels us here in the coalition, that desire to create a community where everybody, especially survivors, especially children who are living with trauma

and abuse, to feel that they can safely ask for help, and they know that there's going to be support, love, and compassion regardless of what happened to them," Tenorio said.

The most rewarding part for Tenorio, as an advocate, is for a survivor to approach her and tell her that the coalition is making a difference.

Tenorio encourages victims and survivors, if they're ready, to come in and talk about their experiences and, if they need help, the coalition will do anything in their power to provide them with the help that they need.

"Every survivor needs something different. Every survivor has a different definition of justice, of peace, of safety, and we want them to know that whatever it is that they envision, for them, that we are supportive of that and if they are not getting what they need, we are committed to helping," she said.

Tenorio explained that the coalition is not a direct service provider, but they have helped survivors by either talking to them, listening to them, and helping them figure out what services they need and refer them to the proper agencies if need be.

WHERE

From Page 1

stalled

■ 2,744: Tents installed and provided

■ 66: Temporary classrooms installed

■ 94: Volunteer Agencies Leading & Organizing Repairs projects completed

■ 2,144: Concrete power poles

■ 215,879: Cubic yards of typhoon debris removed

■ 193: Shipping containers of household hazardous waste collected

Mariana Resort & Spa

The Department of Public Lands is maintaining the property and it is awaiting the appraisal value with improvements included, according to chief of staff Angel A. Demapan.

Because there is no other complete proposal from another company, DPL is continuing negotiations with the Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC for the long-term lease. Once negotiations are final, DPL is required by law to publicize a notice of intent to lease, Demapan said.

DPL has also reported that there are two developers interested in the property. They have toured the facility, but haven't submitted an official or complete proposal.

Imperial Pacific Resort

Construction of six of a planned 15 VIP villas are now complete. Eric Poon, IPI vice president for construction, said the resort hotel's soft opening date will soon be announced.

The east wing of the resort hotel has already been granted a conditional certificate of occupancy permit and a conditional fire permit.

Phase 1 of the resort hotel is expected to be completed today, Dec. 31, 2019.

Honest Profit

Completion of the Honest Profit International Ltd.'s \$130-million, 312-room hotel project in San Antonio is targeted for completion by the end of 2020.

Super Typhoon Yutu damaged the project and the lack of CW-1 workers has slowed down the construction. At present, the contractor, Win Win Way Construction Co. Saipan Inc., is still looking for more workers as they don't have enough manpower. At present, construction is ongoing in the interior of the buildings. Landscaping is the last phase of the project.

Pacific Islands Club

The Pacific Islands Club in San Antonio reopened almost two months after the destruction of Super Typhoon Yutu. Today, PIC's repair/renova-

tion is about 95% complete, according to PIC general manager Gloria Cavanagh.

PIC is looking at possibly doing small renovation of rooms in 2020.

In terms of occupancy, Cavanagh said the last couple of weeks and this coming week looks good, with room occupancy at 92%.

She said the last quarter of this year has been soft.

Coral Ocean Point Golf Resort

Hotel Association of the NMI president Gloria Cavanagh the reopening date of Coral Ocean Point Golf Resort in Koblerville has been moved from March 2020 to June 2020.

Cavanagh said the hotel probably sustained the worst damage and, much like the whole island, it may have to be rebuilt. Work is ongoing.

CPA

Commuter terminal

The commuter terminal sustained major damage inside and out and has been condemned. A new one will be built in the same location with a slightly larger footprint, with additional airline office space, larger holding room, and smaller concession space to accommodate the larger holding room and larger restrooms, and federal facilities. Design work is being negotiated at this time. Overall completion may be in 2021. A temporary commuter terminal for current operations has been built east of the existing building.

Passenger loading bridges

Replacement of loading bridges at Gates 2, 3, and 6 were



More than a year after Super Typhoon Yutu devastated Saipan and Tinian in October 2018, the Northern Marianas College gym still stands as a hulking reminder of how powerful the Category 5 typhoon was, which had a top wind speed of 177 mph.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

bidded out before Yutu and was awarded in January 2019 to AIC Marianas. They have removed the bridges at Gates 2, 3, 6, and 5 and will soon remove the bridges at Gates 4 and Gate 1.

Gates 2, 3, and 6 should be completed by November 2020. Current project costs are

See WHERE on Next Page

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<p>2018 TOYOTA C-HR Blizzard Pearl White, Est. Mileage: 8,800 Stock #U19115R NOW \$20,999*</p>	<p>2020 TOYOTA COROLLA Super White, Est. Mileage: 11,097 Stock #R19054F NOW \$21,999*</p>	<p>2016 TOYOTA HIGHLANDER Magnetic Gray Metallic, Est. Mileage: 34,675 Stock #R19040F. Was \$24,999 NOW \$22,499*</p>	<p>2017 TOYOTA RAV 4 Electric Storm Blue, Est. Mileage: 13,820 Stock #U19095R NOW \$23,499*</p>	<p>2016 TOYOTA HIGHLANDER White, Est. Mileage: 18,083 4-cyl. Stock #U19049R. Was \$24,999 NOW \$23,999*</p>

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WHERE

From Page 5

\$7.4 million.

CPA is also applying for an Economic Development Administration grant to replace Gates 1, 4, and 5.

The design for the additional three bridges is ongoing and will be completed by January 2020. The project will then be advertised for bidding and awarded by early 2020, with a completion date in 2021.

Roof leaks

CPA has solicited quotations for the repairs to the air-conditioning ducting and

access ladders, which need to be repaired before the waterproofing can be replaced. The waterproofing was substantially damaged by the typhoon. Once the ducting and ladders have been repaired/replaced, the waterproofing and high roofs will be repaired.

Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Station

The airport fire station's roof and interior and exterior were damaged. Roof repairs were completed in mid-2019 at a cost of \$270,000.

Requests for proposals are being prepared for painting, and replacement of roll-up doors and acoustic ceil-

ing tiles.

Perimeter fence replacement

CPA engineering is preparing a scope of work for repairs and replacement of the perimeter fence of the Saipan airport, including other facilities such as the generator building, the aircraft waste disposal, the overnight parking lot, the water pump house, ARFF, the Air Traffic Control Tower and the ARFF Training Facility.

Air Traffic Control Tower

Design work for renovations to the tower were already underway prior to Yutu but CPA

had to take the typhoon damage into consideration. The damage is being incorporated into the renovations project, which is currently under design. Current design costs are \$332,000.

ARFF Training Facility

CPA is coordinating with the project manager of the original facility construction to assist with scoping and coordination of specialized contractors to repair the training facility. A contractor will be hired for general repairs and the specialized contractors that were involved with the facility's original construction will be contacted to provide quota-

tions for those specialized systems.

CPA is also working in-house for immediate repairs to the facility to allow live burns to continue on site while the other non-critical repairs are being completed.

Rotating beacon replacement

CPA issued a request for proposals and awarded the replacement of the fallen beacon for the amount of \$327,000. Completion is set for July 2020.

CUC

CUC's Typhoon Yutu Restoration Plan focuses on hardening and strengthening of CUC's overhead power distribution system on Saipan and Tinian. That includes the installation of at least 2,121 concrete poles to replace wooden poles. It also includes installing transformers, pole hardware and conductors. CUC will move forward with implementation of the restoration plan once funding becomes obligated and available for use.

Emergency repairs, overhauls

The CUC board has authorized the CUC management to release \$6 million to repair and overhaul its power engines and to secure a temporary electric power supply. Aggreko has been hired to provide the temporary power for 90 days, at a cost of \$1.52 million.

Tinian power and water supply

No power outage as power generation has 20 megawatts, but highest peak is only 2MW.

No water supply problem as well, with the Maui Well 1 is producing 28,544,400 gallons.

Rota power and water supply

No power outage and two generator units are on standby. No problem with water supply as the main water cave continues to produce 460 gallons of water per minute, while the Sinapalo reservoir is at a full level. Water well number 1 is on standby.

PSS

Schools on full-day sessions:

1. Kagman High School
2. Saipan Southern High School
3. Marianas High School
4. Garapan Elementary School
5. Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School
6. Da'Ok Academy (temporarily at Northern Marianas Trades Institute)
7. Hopwood Middle School (temporarily at Koblerville Elementary School; Hopwood campus closed)
8. Tinian Jr.-Sr. High School
9. Tinian Elementary School
10. Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Jr.-Sr. High School
11. Sinapalo Elementary School

Schools on half-day/double sessions (expected to be back to full sessions by early 2020)

1. Dandan Middle School (half-day sessions due to electrical issues)
2. Kagman Elementary School (temporarily at COVMS due to electrical issues)
3. Chacha Oceanview Middle School (combined with KagES, PM session)
4. Oleai Elementary School (double sessions)
5. William S. Reyes Elementary School (double sessions)
6. Francisco M. Sablan Middle School (double sessions)
7. Koblerville Elementary School (double sessions)

NMC

■ NMC Saipan: Fully operational (9 buildings for demolition, total of 24 classroom pods)

■ NMC Rota: Fully operational

■ NMC Tinian: Fully operational

CHCC

■ CHC: Fully operational

■ KCHC: Fully operational

(With reports from Erwin Encinares and Marc Venus)

MAY THE YEAR AHEAD BRING YOU
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2020

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

IT&E

Navy trainings set

The U.S. Navy will conduct training on Jan. 6-9, from 11am to 11:55pm, in Dandan-Malojloj.

The U.S. Navy will also conduct live-fire training from 7am to 4pm on Jan. 6-10 at Warning Area 517.

Additionally, the U.S. Navy will conduct open ocean exercises from 10am to 9pm on Jan. 7-8 at the following coordinates: 13°29'N/144°25'E.

The public, fishermen, and boat operators are advised to

remain clear within five nautical miles of the training area.

These types of trainings are designed to enhance the readiness of military personnel. Residents in surrounding areas should not be alarmed if they see or hear increased activity associated with the training.

It is recommended the public, fishermen, and marine tour operators monitor the U.S. Coast Guard broadcast notice to mariners for advisories. (PR)

High court affirms ruling that marriage was invalid

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Supreme Court has affirmed the ruling of the Superior Court that finds a marriage ceremony performed at a Philippine consulate on Saipan to be invalid and not enforceable by the local court.

In a ruling issued Friday, the CNMI Supreme Court found that the marriage between Virginia Bonifacio Medina and Gil Ramos Medina performed at the Philippine Consulate General on Saipan to be invalid because it failed to comply with the mandatory marriage requirements under CNMI law.

Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro penned the high court's decision. Associate Justices John A. Manglona and Perry B. Inos concurred with Castro's ruling.

The justices said that even if they were to undertake a conflict of laws analysis as to which jurisdiction bears the most substantial relationship to the couple, they would still find that CNMI law controls, not Philippine law.

The high court's justices said that Gil Medina had a substantial relationship with the CNMI, not the Philippines, thereby affirming Superior Court Associate Judge Teresa K. Kim-Tenorio's ruling.

The justices said to be sure, Virginia Medina and her children with Gil Medina spent the entirety of their lives in the Philippines. Gil Medina, on the other hand, spent the vast majority of his life on Saipan while married to Virginia Medina. Furthermore, the justices said, Gil Medina clearly sought to make Saipan his home. He filed his taxes here, citing at least one dependent in his tax returns.

Gil Medina worked on Saipan as a bus driver, had a social security number, and sought U.S. citizenship.

The justices said Gil Medina held himself out as being married to Antonia Reyes Medina, a Chuukese, and issued a note to her and their reared children upon his death.

"It is therefore evident that while Virginia Medina spent her life in the Philippines, Gil Medina spent his in the CNMI," the justices said.

In her ruling in January 2018, Kim-Tenorio said that, under the Vienna Convention, U.S.-Philippine Treaties, and U.S. law, a legal marriage was required to

be performed in accordance with local laws.

In finding the marriage between Virginia Medina and Gil Ramos Medina in 1993 on Saipan to be invalid, Kim-Tenorio said the ceremony was lacking a marriage license, and was not registered in the marriage register.

» **Chuuk wife wants to cremate deceased husband, Philippine wife wants burial in PH**

Kim-Tenorio, however, found the marriage between Gil Medina and Antonia Reyes Medina, a Chuukese, in 1997 in Chuuk to be valid.

Kim-Tenorio said Antonia Medina is the only wife of Gil Medina, and as such, she has the right to bury her husband as she sees fit.

According to court records, on Dec. 19, 2017, Gil Medina killed himself at their home on Saipan. He left a handwritten note addressed to Antonia Medina, her children, and their grandchild/reared son.

Arrangements were made for a funeral viewing and cremation with Borja Funeral Home to take place Jan. 9, 2018. A representative from the Philippine Consulate approached Antonia Medina on Jan. 8, 2018 and informed her about Gil Medina's alleged marriage to Virginia Medina in 1993 on Saipan.

The consulate representative told Antonia Medina about Virginia Medina's claim to Gil Medina's body.

Virginia Medina was also against the cremation of the body. She would like the body to be repatriated back to the Philippines to be buried by herself and the two children she had with him.

Virginia Medina asserted she was validly married to Gil Medina and has a right to dispose of the body as she chooses.

Then-Philippine consul Renato L. Villapando officiated the marriage ceremony between Gil Medina and Virginia Medina at the Philippine Consulate General on Saipan in 1993.

Shortly thereafter, Virginia Medina returned to the Philippines and gave birth to their first child. Gil Medina remained in the CNMI.

Gil Medina visited the Philippines once in 2001 and once in September 2017. During his 2001 visit, Gil Medina conceived a second child with Virginia Medina.

Antonia Medina and Gil Medina were married in April 1997 in Chuuk. The two then lived together on Saipan.

At the time of the mar-

riage, Antonia Medina had three children from a previous relationship.

Antonia Medina, through counsel Jane Mack and Christopher Heeb, filed a petition questioning the validity of marriage between Gil Medina and Virginia Medina.

Steven Pixley represented Virginia Medina at the hearing.

Antonia Medina's argument is that because the CNMI statute was not followed, the marriage ceremony between Gil Medina and Virginia Medina did not cre-

ate a valid marriage.

Pixley argued that Gil Medina and Virginia Medina were not required to comply with local law because the Philippine Consulate General is sovereign territory, and their marriage was presumptively legal in the Philippines.

In her ruling, Kim-Tenorio said while Gil Medina and Virginia Medina were over the age of 18, there is no evidence they were ever issued a license by the CNMI mayor or governor.

Virginia Medina appealed Kim-Tenorio's order to the

Supreme Court. In her appeal, Virginia Medina, through counsel, argues that Philippine law controls the validity of her marriage to Gil Medina and that the judge erred in finding her marriage invalid in both Commonwealth and Philippine law.

In affirming Kim-Tenorio's ruling, the high court justices said where a couple fails to meet the mandatory marriage requirements, the marriage may be held invalid.

The justices said Virginia Medina does not demonstrate that the Philippine

consul was duly authorized to solemnize marriages.

The justices said neither a marriage license application nor any fees were submitted by Gil Medina or Virginia Medina.

Consequently, the justices said, no marriage license application for Virginia Medina's marriage to Gil Medina was ever submitted or recorded with the court.

The justice said Gil Medina and Virginia Medina failed to comply with the prescribed marriage requirements.



magical

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IT&E

Public warned of rough seas, dangerous rip currents

A high surf advisory is now in effect until 6pm today, Tuesday, along north facing reefs due to swells from winter storms moving off the coast of Japan. A high surf advisory means that high surf will affect beaches in the area, producing localized beach erosion and dangerous swimming conditions.

There is also a high risk of rip currents through Friday afternoon.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, and compiled at the

CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, buoy data indicates that the north swell has increased enough to generate hazardous surf on north facing reefs. There is also a high risk of rip currents on north and east facing reefs. The hazardous surf will generate dangerous rip currents along north facing reefs. The east swell will generate a high risk of dangerous rip currents along east facing reefs through Friday.

There will be a high risk of dangerous rip currents along east facing reefs through Friday.

The risk could extend to north facing reefs by today, Tuesday.

The public is being advised to avoid venturing out along north facing reefs and beaches. Large breaking waves can knock you down and cause serious injuries. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water. Stay out of the water. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Do not swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help. *(Saipan Tribune)*



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Ukulele classes at JKPL

The Joeten-Kiyu Public Library registration for beginner and intermediate ukulele class is ongoing. It is open to children ages 8 years or older and adults. The total cost for eight class sessions is \$50. Ukulele classes are held at the public library in partnership with ukulele instructor Larry Lee and children. Sessions are set to begin on Jan. 7, 2020, every Tuesday from 4:30pm to 5:30pm.

The JKPL ukulele class is based on "First come; first paid." Students must provide their own ukuleles and a folder to hold music sheets (plastic

sheet protectors and a 3-ring binder are recommended). Parents/guardians must sign a liability waiver Form on behalf of their participating children and must adhere to public library policies and procedures. For questions regarding ukulele class, call Celina Foreman or Caitlyn Crisostomo at 235-7315/7322 during regular library hours. Class dates are subject to change, unless otherwise specified. *(PR)*

Kumisión I Fino' Chamoru meeting set

The Kumisión i Fino' Chamoru yan i Fina'ná'guen i Historia yan i Lina'la' i Tao-tao Tãno' (Commission on Chamoru Language and the Teaching of the History and Culture of the Indigenous People of Guam) will hold its first January monthly meeting on Jan. 9, 2020, Thursday from 12:30pm to 3pm at the Guam Museum conference room, in Hågatña. Call Roland Blas, Kumisión secretary for special accommodations and agenda at 480-4047 or email at rolandblas1973@gmail.com. *(PR)*

Guam PTAC sets federal contracting workshops

The Guam Procurement Technical Assistance Center is offering free workshops to the public for January 2020. Workshops run from 9am-10am at the University of Guam in the Jesus and Eugenia Leon Guerrero Business and Public Admin Building, Margarita Perez & Jaime Tuquero IT&E Lecture Hall, Room 131 (unless otherwise specified):

■ **Jan. 2:** Invoice Processing Platform—Currently, 108 federal government entities,

including USDA, DOI, and the Treasury use the Invoice Processing Platform to manage vendor invoicing and payments. The Guam PTAC will provide an overview of IPP.

■ **Jan. 9:** Cybersecurity: Federal Contractor Responsibilities—Cybersecurity is a national security issue. We will discuss what Federal contractors can do to make sure they are complying with DOD requirements with respect to keeping data protected.

■ **Jan. 16:** SBIR/STTR Programs—The Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer programs encourage small businesses to engage in Federal Research and Development that has the potential for commercialization. We will explain the programs and show how innovators can get involved.

■ **Jan. 23:** Government of Guam Procurement—The Guam PTAC will explain Government of Guam Procurement, where to find opportunities, and how to submit bids.

■ **Jan. 30:** DLA Internet Bid Board System—The DLA Internet Bid Board System provides the capability to search for, view, and submit secure quotes for DLA supply RFQs, RFPs, and IFBs. The Guam PTAC will guide you through the process of setting up an account and navigating the system.

For Project Management Professionals, Guam PTAC workshops may count toward your annual Professional Development Unit goals!

Register at <http://guamp-tac.com/news-and-events.php>, or call/email Therese at 735-2552/admin@guamptac.com. Walk-ins are welcome.

SPECIAL MEETING

Board of Directors
Northern Marianas Trades Institute
9:00 a.m. Room 4, Lower Base
Saipan, MP 96950

AGENDA

- I. Adoption of Board of Directors (BOD) Resolution 015-20
- II. Adjournment

-----ALSO-----

Pursuant to P.L. 20-92, Governor Ralph Deleon Guerrero Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Northern Marianas Technical Institute Board of Trustees (NMTI), are hereby giving notice that the Board will hold a Special Meeting on January 6th, 2020, at 9:30am at the Northern Marianas Trades Institute campus.

AGENDA

- I. Election of Pro Tem Chairperson
- II. Adoption of Board of Trustees Resolution, BOT- 001-01-20
- III. Adoption of Board of Trustees Resolution, BOT-002-01-20
- IV. Adjournment



PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY CNMI GOVERNMENT



REQUEST OF PROPOSALS RFP NO.: RFP20-BECQ/DCRM-025

SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 17, 2020 TIME: 10:30 A.M.

“LEED ® GREEN ASSOCIATE (GA) TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION FOR THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL COASTAL QUALITY, DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT”

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENSION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

ALL QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP **MUST** BE SUBMITTED VIA-EMAIL TO **MS. SAM SABLAN** BY EMAIL AT ssablan@dcrm.gov.mp, **NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS JANUARY 06, 2020**. RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL PERSPECTIVE PROPOSERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ELI D. CABRERA
ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS CNMI GOVERNMENT



INVITATION TO BID ITB NO.: DPW20-ITB-002

SUBMISSION DATE: January 17, 2020 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

“Supply and Delivery of a Tire Shredder for the Department of Public Works, Saipan”

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

A non-refundable payment of **Fifty Dollars (\$50.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at DPW Technical Services Division required for each set.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **January 3, 2020**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Lower Base Transfer Station, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **January 14, 2020** to **Ms. Lorraine M. Seman, Acting Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS CNMI GOVERNMENT



INVITATION TO BID ITB NO.: DPW20-ITB-006

SUBMISSION DATE: January 23, 2019 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

“Repair and Renovation of CK Basketball Court District 1 Chalan Kanoa, Saipan”

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

A non-refundable payment of **One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at DPW Technical Services Division required for each set.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **January 10, 2020**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the CK Basketball Court District 1 Chalan Kanoa, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **January 16, 2020** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) HOMELESS PREVENTION COALITION

PUBLIC NOTICE

DECEMBER 31, 2019

We would like to inform the General Public that CNMI Homeless Prevention Coalition will be conducting a public forum on January 15, 2019, 6:00 p.m. at the Kagman Community Center. The forum will provide information regarding the CNMI Homeless Prevention Coalition's purpose in the community.

The Coalition will also be conducting the CNMI Point-In Time Count on January 25, 2020 for the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. Any interested volunteers may send their information to jjmuna@nmhc.gov.mp or gbliss@dys.gov.mp on or before January 15, 2020, at 9 a.m. The volunteer orientation will be held at the Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe on January 17, 2020, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and on January 18, 2020, from 9:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m. at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Central Office in Garapan.

For all inquiries you may contact Ms. Gennie Bliss at (670)237-1000 or Mr. Jacob Muna at 234-6866/9447.

Respite Center to open January 2020

By **JUSTINE NAUTA**
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Respite Service Program will be host-

ing its first open house for its Respite Center from Jan. 8 to Jan. 10, 2020, at Building 1354 Mednilla Avenue on Capital Hill, from 10am to 3pm.

According to Department of Community and Cultural Affairs spokesperson Eulalia V. Arriola, the open house intends to educate the public

about the program, that the Respite Center will be available to all caregivers of all ages who are taking care of someone full-time at home. Their main focus is to let caregivers know that they are there when a caregiver needs them.

Arriola said the main focus of the program is to give temporary relief for caregivers. She said they will provide a program that will allow up to three hours per week for a person who registers with their program to have time to themselves while a professional

takes care of the person that they're caring for.

Respite Service providers will either go into a home during a scheduled time and relieve the primary caretaker for a period of time or utilize the Respite Service facility.

Their main purpose is to offer assistance to caregivers who don't have time for themselves. According to Arriola, there have been cases where caregivers don't take care of themselves and end up sicker than the person they're taking care of. They hope to promote the importance of health and

self-care for caregivers.

The Respite Service Program hopes to open another building where they will be offering classes such as cooking classes, gardening classes, yoga, painting and other activities that will bring relaxation to caregivers.

Respite Service programs have been proven to reduce abuse, especially elder abuse, and improve the overall care of children with disabilities and senior citizens who are being cared for full-time at home. Respite care services also improve the caretaker's health.



From left, Linda Torres, who heads the Respite Care Program, Eulalia V. Arriola, Ferlon Camacho, and Regina Terlaje.

JUSTINE NAUTA

DYS to open KCC to public in March 2020

The Division of Youth Services has pushed back a plan to make the Kagman Community Center in Kagman available to the public for any kind of event that will benefit families and children of all ages.

DYS initially intended to open up the facility to the public in January 2020. However, due to past storms,

such as Typhoon Soudelor and Super Typhoon Yutu, this had to be pushed back to March 2020.

According to DYS administrator Vivian Sablan, DYS plans to host activities and programs such as parenting classes, their Summer Youth Empowerment camps, children's program, and

more at KCC.

DYS hopes to have the facility functioning at 100% by March 2020 so that their community partners have access to the facility. They also encourage people who aren't in the Kagman area to use the facility as long as it's non-profit.

They are also open to having volunteers to help supervise children and assist in any activities. *(Justine Nauta)*



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Opinion

Hafa Adair Saipan Tribune

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Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950**Jayvee L. Vallejera** EDITOR
jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com**Mark Rabago** ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

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EDITORIAL

Climate change and the incredible shrinking songbird

As polar vortexes loom and food grows seasonally scarce, there's more enduring bad news about the plight of birds. On the heels of a study that found North American birds in the throes of a steep population decline, new research concludes that this continent's songbirds have been steadily shrinking in size over a span of nearly four decades.

Fewer birds, smaller birds. Don't just give Polly a cracker. Give her the whole box.

What does this mean for the species that beams at the sound of a warbler's warble during a morning walk through the park, or gushes over the sight of a blue jay perched on the bough of a silver maple? Should Homo sapiens be worried about a bird apocalypse? Should we fret that, if it can happen to them, it can happen to us?

First, a look at the science. University of Michigan scientists working with Field Museum researchers studied thousands of birds belonging to 52 species that crashed into high-rises in Chicago between 1978 and 2016, and were preserved at the museum's bird collection. Scientists took several measurements, including each bird's weight and wing length.

The measurements, reported this month by The Wall Street Journal, showed that, over that 38-year span, body size dropped significantly, while wings became longer. Why? Climate change. Which makes sense:

Over these decades, temperatures rose nearly 2 degrees Fahrenheit in the birds' summer breeding grounds north of Chicago. That corresponded with a drop in body weight of up to a couple of grams, and a rise of a few millimeters in wing length.

The causal link between climate change and bird size has to do with the scientific tenet that warm-blooded species often have larger bodies in places that are colder, and smaller bodies in warmer locales. A smaller, more compact body releases heat faster. Hence, birds are getting smaller because their world is getting hotter.

The scale of body mass loss is small enough that we don't have to worry about cardinals and robins shrinking to the point of being smaller than the insects they now rely on for a snack. It is, however, another red flag about the reach climate change has, and the need for mankind to stop turning up the temperature.

Many species have been adversely affected by global warming, and man's reluctance to move fast enough to protect the planet. Populations of polar bears are dropping because of melting sea ice. Coral reefs around the world are in decline due to climate change. The adverse impact is never abruptly cataclysmic; it's almost always gradual, and virtually imperceptible in real time.

But it's there. It's happening. And it's a warble of warning that we should heed.

(c)2019 Chicago Tribune



May the (Space) Force be with you

With the recent passage of this year's big defense bill, Congress authorized the creation of a sixth branch of the armed forces—the United States Space Force. The move reflects the growing militarization of space, as the other branches have grown increasingly reliant on operations there. Despite criticism from spending hawks and late-night comics, the Space Force is an idea whose time has come. But the public, understandably, has questions: What will it look like? What will its mission be?

It's worth pointing out that the U.S. hasn't created a new branch of the military since the Air Force in 1947. While not without controversy at the time, that move simply recognized the reality at the time that air operations were going to become increasingly large and complex. This necessitated a cadre of true experts who would "grow up" thinking, planning, procuring equipment and actually conducting pure aviation in that domain—alongside the Navy at sea and the Army ashore.

That is the essential rationale for the U.S. Space Force—given the complexity and scale of operations in space, that domain requires a dedicated mission focus. Unlike Russia and China, which each have had dedicated space forces, the United States has relied largely on the U.S. Air Force to run space operations, with supporting efforts from the Army and Navy. In many cases, this puts space forces at a disadvantage in a fighter- and bomber-dominated Air Force.

The basic mission of the Space Force will be to train, equip and organize to conduct military operations in space. This means running the extensive constellation of U.S. military satellites (currently managed by the services separately depending on function); operating the military's launch facilities such as the Air Force's bases at Vandenberg in California and elsewhere; executing financial planning and programming to purchase satellites and ground support equipment; and above all, training a specialized cadre of space officers and enlisted men and women.

It will start small with a few hundred specialists, probably reporting to a chief of space operations (a title resembling that of the head of the U.S. Navy, the chief of naval operations). Over time it will probably grow to 10,000 to 15,000 trainers, operators and leaders whose job will be to deliver capability in space to the 10 U.S. combatant commanders—the jobs I held at four-star level both for Latin America and Europe/NATO. During my seven-plus years in command, I would have relished being able to call a fellow four-star in charge of space to levy my needs for greater surveillance, communication and targeting. My successors will be able to do so.

By **JAMES STAVRIDIS**
Bloomberg News

James Stavridis is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. He is a retired U.S. Navy admiral and former supreme allied commander of NATO, and dean emeritus of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. He is also an operating executive consultant at the Carlyle Group and chairs the board of counselors at McLarty Associates.



With that, I have three pieces of advice for the new chief of space operations, whoever he or she will be:

First, study the history. Both the creation of the U.S. Air Force in 1947 and the development of the U.S. Marine Corps offer powerful lessons. Learn how the first year and the initial decade of operations unfolded for the Air Force, studying the record to see the pitfalls and lay out a plan to avoid them. Those pitfalls include whether the services will resist giving up resources, whether the Joint Chiefs of Staff will pay heed to the "new" member, and what role Congress must take in giving initial lift to the new service. Likewise, the history of the Marine Corps—which remained a tiny adjunct to the Navy until World War I and World War II created a narrative of larger-scale land operations—is instructive.

Second, build solid relationships, with both your boss—presumably the secretary of the Air Force—and the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As the new kid on the block, you will require a special sense of humility, empathy and good humor to fit in the elite company of the other service chiefs. Likewise, building peer relationships with the 10 combatant commanders—who are the end users of the Space Force in conducting operations—will be crucial. Working closely with the U.S. Special Operations Command—which has both "train, equip, and organize" and operational responsibilities—will be particularly helpful.

Third, push for a long tenure at the upper levels of the Space Force. One of the reasons the Navy's high-tech nuclear programs have succeeded is that the chief of naval reactors has always served a minimum of eight years in that essential job. To get the Space Force launched—pardon the pun—will require more than the typical four-year service chief tenure. Likewise, the other se-

See MAY on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY

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Probate administrators: Boss or employee?

Does this sound familiar? Mom and dad pass away. Years later the kids decide to probate their parents' estates. One sibling is appointed as the administrator of the estates and then lords it over the rest of the family. Wielding this newfound power, they use the estate's assets as a piggy bank and act like they get to decide who gets what, all the while using their authority as an implicit threat that the rest of the family better be nice to the administrator or risk getting cut out of the inheritance.

Is the administrator really the boss? Can they use an estate's assets for personal use? Do they have the final say about how to slice up the estate? No. Not at all. In fact, the opposite is true. Administrators are servants of the estate, and personally liable for not acting in the estate's best interests. In short, it's not a position of power; it's a position of trust.

Now that we've exploded one of the most common misconceptions that I run into, let's talk about who can be an administrator, what they do, and what happens if they don't live up to the lofty responsibilities imposed upon administrators.

Who can be an administrator? Anyone. Well, almost anyone. The person must be an adult of sound mind who ideally resides in the Commonwealth.

Notice that I didn't say that the administrator needs to be part of the family. That's because there's no such requirement. It just happens that most of the time a family member will serve as administrator.

But sometimes having an outsider handle the probate is best. One example is a contentious probate where a neutral person will be immune to family politics and better able to make hard calls. And the same is true if the estate is especially large and complex. This kind of estate can benefit from using a sophisticated administrator who understands how to handle the issues unique to a complex estate.

Moving to question two, what does an administrator do? Dozens of things. But generally speaking, an administrator's duties

fall into six buckets.

First, they figure out who might have an interest in the estate. This group includes potential heirs, next of kin, and creditors—i.e., people that the estate owes money to.

Second, they determine what the estate owns and owes. Assets will include cars, land, bank accounts, retirement accounts, life-insurance policies, and so on. Debts will mostly involve car loans and mortgages. But don't be surprised if people pop up with informal IOUs and the occasional lawsuit.

Third, if the estate owns any property, then the administrator may have the property appraised. An appraisal can be especially important if the estate will distribute cash to people rather than gifting each piece of property directly to heirs.

Fourth, the administrator will work with an attorney to navigate the formal probate process. This process starts with an application asking the court to formally appoint the administrator. Shortly after, the administrator will file a notice of the probate proceedings in the Saipan Tribune or Marianas Variety. Weeks or months after that, the administrator will submit an inventory of the estate to the court followed by a petition for final distribution. Throughout, the administrator will attend multiple court hearings.

Fifth, while the probate proceedings wind through court, the administrator must manage the estate's assets. For example, the administrator may need to pay taxes, mortgage payments, and invest the rest. In so doing, the administrator has what's known as a fiduciary duty to manage the assets prudently. In other words, the administrator must act in the estate's best interest, not their own. Anything less and the administrator is in hot water under the law.

Sixth, the administrator must keep detailed and thorough records of the estate's assets and what happens to them during the probate process. For instance, the administrator may need to set up separate bank accounts to hold the estate's assets and investments until the probate wraps up. Under no circumstances should the administrator place the estate's assets in someone else's ac-

FINE PRINT

By **JORDAN SUNDELL**

Special to the Saipan Tribune



Jordan Sundell is a lawyer primarily practicing business, real estate, estate-planning, and asset-protection law. He formerly worked for the CNMI Supreme Court and Bridge Capital and is now general counsel for several real-estate companies, including JZ Group. His columns—focused mainly on real estate, small business, and estate planning—are published every other Tuesday. Be sure to like the Fine Print on Facebook!

counts. Estate assets must be kept separate and identifiable.

What happens if an administrator doesn't act properly? Then an interested party (i.e., an heir or creditor) can ask the court to remove the administrator. For example, an administrator may be removed if they act with bias or favoritism, neglect their duties, miss court deadlines, unreasonably delay the probate process, embezzle funds, destroys assets, use estate funds for personal benefit, or misbehave in some other important way.

But note: A little friction between the administrator and heirs is not enough to remove an administrator. Removal is reserved for serious misbehavior.

Hopefully this article has simplified the probate process for you. But if you're still uncertain or have questions not covered here, speak with an attorney about your situation. And do it soon because legal problems seldom age well.

This column is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be taken as legal advice. For your specific case, consult a lawyer.

Vintage 2020 is delicious already

Cut the tags off 2020, sweetheart: We are proud owners of this new year, and there's no reason to pretend we can return it.

Time doesn't offer a refund. We don't get to try on the future the way we try on a bathing suit and then decide we don't like it once we see what it looks like in natural light.

We broke the seal on the new year, and it's ours.

Every year has an expiration date, as does every lifetime. Even the finest wine can't age forever.

Actually, since I had no idea what the best wine can do (being fond of the kind of pinot grigios that come with screw caps), I did some research—on the computer. I don't live in the kind of place where you can go to a fine-dining establishment and ask to see their vintage wine list. If you ask a server for a seriously old wine in my neighborhood, they'll look at you funny and then bring you a half-finished glass from somebody else's table.

If you respond with a chuckle and explain that, according to the Wine Folly website, appreciating vintage is important because "good vintages have the best opportunities to get better with age and ... vintage years hold some serious weight," they'll look at you funny and then ask you how much those vintage years actually weigh.

Anyway, it was online that I discovered there are drinkable wines around 300 years old.

I'm not sure how those taste tests work, exactly. Are you supposed to say, "Wow, this tastes exactly like what I thought 1727 would taste like, with hints of the Siege of Gibraltar, a roughness around the edges suggesting the Coronation of George II, as well as pervasive horse manure?"

Or is the idea is to be able to contain, however briefly, in one's own system a museum-quality beverage, in the way a person might swallow an emerald tiara just to have it in their gut for a while?

While this action might be one person's definition of fun, it is certainly everybody's definition of how you can tell an individual has inherited far too much money.

What it also tells us is that what we prize is the concept of rarity. We want to possess what they're not making any more, what not many others can get and what will distinguish us from others.

I suggest, therefore, that we grab the time we're given in this new year and hold it close. I suggest we don't let anybody steal it from us, especially if the thief is our worst self.

When I think about how I have tossed away my time, crumpled it and thrown it into the gutter, left it in trains and buses, forgotten parts of it in poorly lit rooms and abandoned it because I couldn't be bothered by details anymore, I wince.

I once gave a copy of a valuable book that had been autographed by the author to a passing boyfriend—and I regretted the gesture almost immediately.

By GINA BARRECA

The Hartford Courant



Gina Barreca is a board of trustees distinguished professor of English literature at University of Connecticut and the author of 10 books. She can be reached at www.ginabarreca.com.

I feel the same way when I think of the time I've spent avoiding the inevitable, in self-pity, in self-inflicted misery, in wasting weeks or months mourning incidents that should have caused, at the most, fleeting distress. Why did I torment myself over haircuts, grades and uncomfortable conversations? Why did I worry about rejections that turned into lifesavers—and refusals that turned out to be rescues?

Until 20 years ago, I felt as if I had a ferret in my heart, clawing, gnawing and scratching in desperation to get out or get in—I could never tell which—and that creature of despair robbed me of years.

I no longer permit time to be torn apart in such a useless way. When I must grieve, I grieve; when I weep, I weep; when pain comes, I hold tight. Either it will pass or I will find ways to make it familiar.

Now in my 60s, I understand and accept that time is the rarest of all commodities, the greatest of all gifts and the most irreplaceable of items.

There's nothing to do with time except bring it out from the cellar, open it to the air, share it with those who matter and drink in every moment.

This year's vintage is best enjoyed this year. Let's begin.

MAY

From Page 10

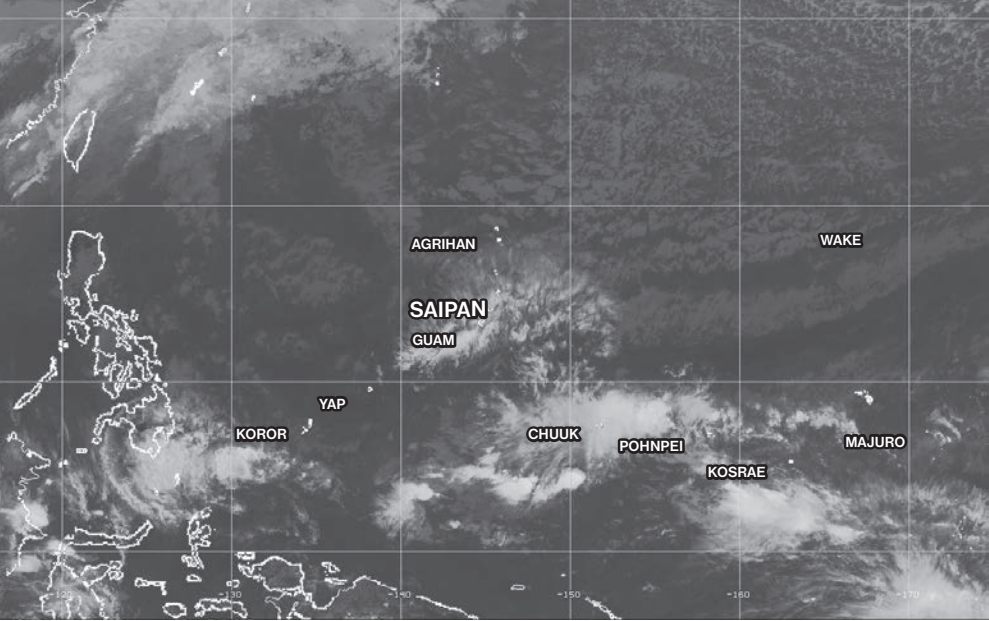
nior leaders of the Space Force should be in place for a longer tenure than is typical while it really gets off the ground.

On a lighter note, let's also remember that the ranks should be naval in character—after all, the *Starship Enterprise* was led by Captain James Kirk, not a Colonel Kirk—and that he always piloted the ship from the "bridge" on the ship, not the "command post."

But whether we end up with an admiral or a general as the chief of space operations, it seems clear that space, this vital fourth domain of combat, requires a focused and dedicated branch of the armed forces to master it for the nation. The voyages of the *Starship Enterprise* may be a century and more away, but the voyages of the U.S. Space Force are about to begin.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
Breezy. Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 25 mph.		Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	
86°	76°	86°	76°	86°	76°	86°	76°	87°	77°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 10:32 AM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2019
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line is expected to move across the local area today. Mostly cloudy skies and breezy winds are expected with its passage. Radar VAD winds shows 2kft winds at 28 knots so gust to 30 mph are possible. The shear line will produce mostly cloudy skies across the Marianas with lingering clouds persisting through Thursday. Despite the clouds, deep-layer moisture will be lacking and only isolated showers are expected. A weak disturbance passing south of Guam will bring in another period of mostly cloudy skies the first weekend of the new year.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Windy	84° / 76°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	84° / 77°	
Yap	Partly Cloudy	85° / 79°	
Chuuk	Windy	85° / 79°	
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	86° / 79°	
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	86° / 79°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	86° / 81°	

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	73° / 61°	
Beijing	Sunny	32° / 14°	
Hong Kong	Mostly Cloudy	68° / 64°	
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	83° / 70°	
London	Cloudy	50° / 46°	
Los Angeles	Sunny	71° / 48°	
Manila	Partly Cloudy	88° / 77°	
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	77° / 55°	
Miami	Partly Cloudy	78° / 65°	
New York	Partly Cloudy	49° / 36°	
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	54° / 37°	
Paris	Partly Cloudy	41° / 34°	
Busan	Sunny	45° / 30°	
Rome	Sunny	52° / 34°	
Salem	Partly Cloudy	59° / 35°	
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	57° / 45°	
Seoul	Mostly Cloudy	37° / 25°	
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	46° / 36°	
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	51° / 34°	

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
4:50 AM	LOW TIDE	-0.25	
12:07 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.58	
5:59 PM	LOW TIDE	0.96	
10:11 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.32	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:42 AM	5:56 PM
Wednesday	6:42 AM	5:57 PM
Thursday	6:43 AM	5:58 PM
Friday	6:43 AM	5:58 PM
Saturday	6:43 AM	5:59 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	10:28 AM	10:19 PM	-
Wednesday	11:06 AM	11:06 PM	-
Thursday	11:42 AM	11:53 PM	-
Friday	12:18 PM	-	-
Saturday	-	12:39 AM	12:53 PM

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 2, 2019								
DEPARTURES					ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)					GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:15am	9:55am	Daily		UA174	7:30am	8:11am	Daily
UA105	6:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6		UA104	4:45pm	5:26pm	2, 4, 6
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)					NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
SKY811	10:15am	3:00pm	Daily		SKY816	4:35pm	7:30pm	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
					SKY816	5:05pm	8:00pm	6
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)					BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
7C3451	3:20am	6:30am	Daily		7C3452	9:35pm	2:30am+1	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
					7C3452	10:05pm	2:30am+1	3
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)					SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	2:05am	6:05am	Daily		OZ6233	8:00am	1:20pm	2, 4, 6
OZ626	2:10am	6:05am	1		OZ623	8:55am	2:30pm	1, 3, 5, 7
OZ626	2:50am	6:25am	3, 7		7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 4, 5, 6		TW309	11:10am	4:25pm	Daily
7C3403	4:35am	8:35am	Daily		OZ625	7:30pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ6243	3:20pm	7:10pm	2, 4, 6		TW307	7:45pm	1:05am+1	Daily
OZ624	3:50pm	7:40pm	1, 3, 5, 7		OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily		7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily
TW310	5:25pm	10:15pm	Daily					
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)					SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
3U8648	6:10am	8:50am	4, 7		3U8647	10:30pm	4:30am+1	3, 6
SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH)					HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN			
JD396	7:30am	12:05pm	1		JD395	8:05am	3:30pm	4
JD396	4:50pm	7:55pm	4		JD395	8:50pm	5:00am+1	7
SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)					BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN			
MU764	1:30am	6:00am	3, 5, 7		MU763	4:50pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)					MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
OZ626/701	2:10am	10:35am	1 via ICN		UA184/174	12:40am	8:11am+1	3, 6 via GUM
OZ626/701	2:50am	10:35am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN		OZ702/625	12:05pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
UA117/183	9:15am	9:50pm	Daily via GUM		OZ702/625	12:05pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA117/193	9:15am	11:50pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR		UA192/174	10:40pm	8:11am+1	2, 5 via GUM-ROR
UA156/183	6:20pm	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via GUM		UA184/174	10:55pm	8:11am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA156/193	6:20pm	11:50pm	2 via GUM-ROR		OZ704/6233	11:45pm	1:20pm+1	1, 3, 5 via ICN
					OZ704/623	11:45pm	2:30pm+1	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)					HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN		OZ746/6233	12:35am	1:20pm	2, 4, 6 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN		OZ746/623	12:35am	2:30pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN
UO43	5:40am	8:40am	1, 3, 5, 7		OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ6243/9661	3:20pm	11:15pm	2, 4, 6 via ICN		OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ624/9661	3:50pm	11:15pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN		UO42	6:50pm	1:45am+1	7
					UO42	9:30pm	4:25am+1	2, 4, 6

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U Sichuan Airlines, 7C Jeju Air, DL Delta Airlines, JD Beijing Capital, UO HK Express, HX HongKong Airlines, MU China Eastern, OZ Asiana Airlines, TW t'way Air, UA United Airlines, BC SkyMark ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.									
SAIPAN TO ROTA				1203	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily		
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1204	10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily		
1301	7:30AM	8:00AM	Daily	1205	11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily		
1302	11:30AM	12:00PM	Daily	1206	12:00PM	12:15PM	Daily		
1303	4:00PM	4:30PM	Daily	1207	1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily		
ROTA TO SAIPAN				1208	2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily		
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1209	3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily		
3101	8:15AM	8:45AM	Daily	1210	4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily		
3102	1:45PM	2:15PM	Daily	1211	5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily		
3103	4:45PM	5:15PM	Daily	1212	6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily		
ROTA TO GUAM				TINIAN TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY		
3401	12:15PM	12:45PM	Daily	2102	7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily		
GUAM TO ROTA				2103	8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily		
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2104	9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily		
4301	1:00PM	1:30PM	Daily	2105	10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily		
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				2106	11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily		
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2107	12:30PM	12:45PM	Daily		
1201	7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily	2108	1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily		
1202	8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily	2109	2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily		
				2110	3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily		
				2111	4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily		
				2112	5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily		
				2113	6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily		



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IN FRONT NEW XO MART (GUARAI RAD)
GARAPAN, IN FRONT OF SUNLEADER, PARKING (NEXT TO OCEANVIEW HOTEL)
KAGMAN2, LIN LIN STORE PARKING

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Business

Hyatt gives yearend joy to 5 beneficiaries



The Northern Marianas Sports Association receives a check donation of \$2,824.18 from Hyatt Regency Saipan, headed by general manager Nick Nishikawa.

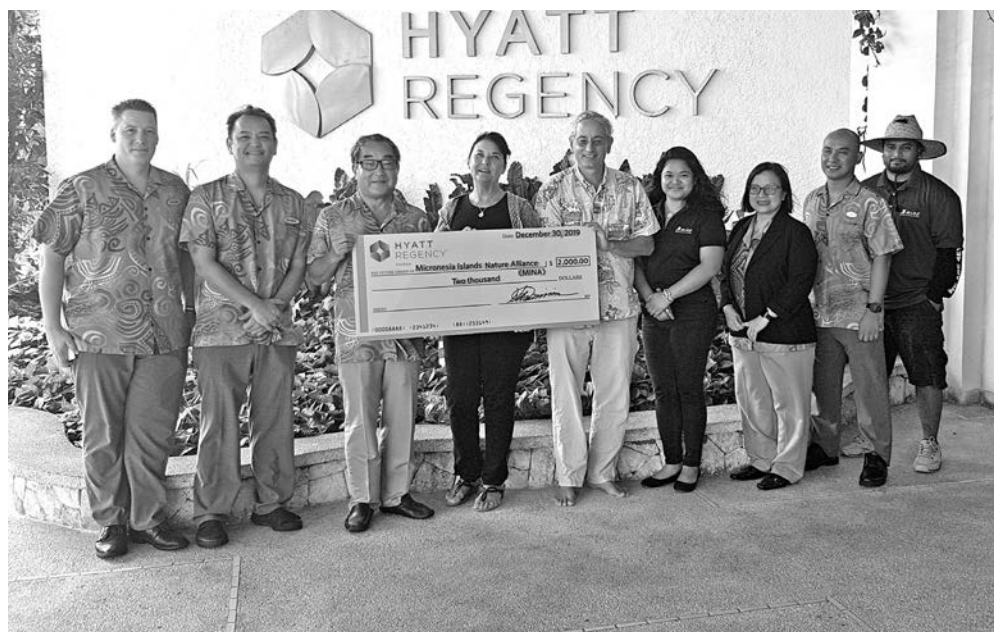
PHOTOS BY BEA CABRERA



The Salvation Army receives a check donation of \$2,000 from Hyatt Regency Saipan, headed by general manager Nick Nishikawa.



Autism Society of the CNMI vice president Romeo Cuellar receives a check donation of \$2,000 from the Hyatt Regency Saipan, headed general manager Nick Nishikawa.



The Micronesia Islands Nature Alliance receives a check donation for \$2,000 from Hyatt Regency Saipan, headed by general manager Nick Nishikawa.

By BEA CABRERA

beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

After a stellar year of charitable donations and community outreach throughout 2019, Hyatt Regency Saipan surprised five more beneficiaries with donations of over \$10,000 a few days before the year ends.

The beneficiaries include the Northern Marianas Sports Association, which received \$2,824.18; the Salvation Army, which received \$2,000; the Micronesia Islands Nature Alliance, which got \$2,000; the Autism Society of the CNMI, which received \$2,000; and the CHC Volunteers Association, which received \$2,000.

Hyatt general manager Nick Nishikawa said the welfare of the CNMI community is always one of Hyatt's priorities. "The CNMI community has gone through many things in 2019 and we pinpointed groups and organizations that needed a boost to find and strengthen their proj-

ects," he said.

Nishikawa explained that the money that Hyatt donated yesterday is surplus from the 23rd Hyatt Charity Golf Classic that was held in April 27, 2019.

Rita Sablan, who spearheaded the volunteers of the CHC Volunteers Association, said the donation will be put to good use. "All the volunteers appreciate any kind of donation and this is a great surprise as this is the first time that Hyatt reached out to us. Part of our work is regularly talking to the CEO of [the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.] to find out what we can do to help the hospital."

According to Autism Society of the CNMI vice president Romeo Cuellar, the money is a "generous donation from the Hyatt and this will take our work very far as far as spreading awareness about autism [is concerned]."

Environmental advocate Micronesia Islands Nature Alliance, which is headed by Roberta Guerrero, received



Members of the CHC Volunteers Association receive a check for \$2,000 from officials of the Hyatt Regency Saipan, headed by general manager Nick Nishikawa.

BEA CABRERA

a phone call from Hyatt last week about the award. "This is really a great way to end the year and gave us something more to be grateful about. We go through ebbs and flows of work but it seems like our work is always flowing and

we are busy all the time, so donations such as this really help push along our projects," she said.

"Right now, we are in the process of applying for new grant opportunities and we've got our pre-proposals. We have

our fingers crossed and lighting candles that the decision-makers in Washington, D.C. will choose our environmental projects and we are hoping to get some awards probably by March 2020," she added.

Nishikawa that they are

looking forward to 2020 and being a consistent partner of the CNMI community in making lives better. "This was quite a difficult year for us in terms of business and we hope that the year 2020 will be great one for everyone," he said.

As 2019 comes to a close, we would like to express our heartfelt appreciation for your continued support and patronage to Saipan Ice & Water Co, Inc.

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Happy New Year

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Nation

Daniel Munoz talks about his experience being injured in Saturday's shooting incident during an interview in a park in Odessa, Texas, Sunday, Sept. 1, 2019.

AP

US mass killings hit new high in 2019, most were shootings

By LISA MARIE PANE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

The first one occurred 19 days into the new year when a man used an ax to kill four family members including his infant daughter. Five months later, 12 people were killed in a workplace shooting in Virginia. Twenty-two more died at a Walmart in El Paso in August.

A database compiled by The Associated Press, USA Today and Northeastern University shows that there were more mass killings in 2019 than any year dating back to at least the 1970s, punctuated by a chilling succession of deadly rampages during the summer.

In all, there were 41 mass killings, defined as when four or more people are killed excluding the perpetrator. Of those, 33 were mass shootings. More than 210 people were killed.

Most of the mass killings barely became national news, failing to resonate among the general public because they didn't spill into public places like massacres in El Paso and Odessa, Texas; Dayton, Ohio; Virginia Beach, Virginia; and Jersey City, New Jersey.

The majority of the killings involved people who knew each other—family disputes, drug or gang violence or people with beefs that directed their anger at co-workers or relatives.

In many cases, what set off the perpetrator remains a mystery.

That's the case with the very first mass killing of 2019, when a 42-year-old man took an ax and stabbed to death his mother, stepfather, girlfriend and 9-month-old daughter in Clackamas County, Oregon. Two others, a roommate and an 8-year-old girl managed to escape; the rampage ended when responding police fatally shot the killer.

The perpetrator had had occasional run-ins with police over the years, but what drove him to attack his family remains unknown. He had just gotten a job training mechanics at an auto dealership, and despite occasional arguments with his relatives, most said there was nothing out of the ordinary that raised significant red flags.

The incident in Oregon was one of 18 mass killings where family members were slain, and one of six that didn't involve a gun. Among other trends in 2019:

- The 41 mass killings were the most in a single year since the AP/USA Today and Northeastern database began tracking such events back to 2006, but other research going back to the 1970s shows no other year with as many mass slayings. The second-most killings in a year prior to 2019 was 38 in 2006.

- The 211 people killed in this year's cases is still eclipsed by the 224 victims in 2017, when the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history took place in Las Vegas.

- California, with some of the most

strict gun laws in the country, had the most, with eight such mass slayings. But nearly half of U.S. states experienced a mass slaying, from big cities like New York, to tiny towns like Elkmont, Alabama, with a population of just under 475 people.

- Firearms were the weapon in all but eight of the mass killings. Other weapons included knives, axes and at least twice when the perpetrator set a mobile home on fire, killing those inside.

- Nine mass shootings occurred in a public place. Other mass killings occurred in homes, in the workplace or at a bar.

James Densley, a criminologist and professor at Metropolitan State University in Minnesota, said the AP/USA Today/Northeastern database confirms and mirrors what his own research into exclusively mass shootings has shown.

"What makes this even more exceptional is that mass killings are going up at a time when general homicides, overall homicides, are going down," Densley said. "As a percentage of homicides, these mass killings are also accounting for more deaths."

He believes it's partially a byproduct of an "angry and frustrated time" that we are living in. Densley also said crime tends to go in waves with the 1970s and 1980s seeing a number of serial killers, the 1990s marked by school shootings and child abductions and the early 2000s dominated

by concerns over terrorism.

"This seems to be the age of mass shootings," Densley said.

He and James Alan Fox, a criminologist and professor at Northeastern University, also expressed worries about the "contagion effect," the focus on mass killings fueling other mass killings.

"These are still rare events. Clearly the risk is low but the fear is high," Fox said. "What fuels contagion is fear."

The mass shootings this year include the three in August in Texas and Dayton that stirred fresh urgency, especially among Democratic presidential candidates, to restrict access to firearms.

While the large death tolls attracted much of the attention, the killings inflicted a mental and physical toll on dozens of others. The database does not have a complete count of victims who were wounded, but among the three mass shootings in August alone, more than 65 people were injured.

Daniel Munoz, 28, of Odessa, was caught in the crossfire of the shooting that took place between a 10-mile (16-kilometer) stretch in West Texas. He was on his way to meet a friend at a bar when he saw a gunman and the barrel of a firearm. Instinctively, he got down just as his car was sprayed with bullets.

Munoz, who moved to Texas about a year ago to work in the oil industry, said he had actually been on edge

since the Walmart shooting, which took place just 28 days earlier and about 300 miles (480 kilometers) away, worried that a shooting could happen anywhere at any time.

He remembers calling his mother after the El Paso shooting to encourage her to have a firearm at home or with her in case she needed to defend herself. He would say the same to friends, telling them before they went to a Walmart to bring a firearm in case they needed to protect themselves or others during an attack.

"You can't just always assume you're safe. In that moment, as soon as the El Paso shooting happened, I was on edge," Munoz said.

Adding to his anxiety is that, as a convicted felon, he's prohibited from possessing a firearm.

A few weeks later, as he sat behind the wheel of his car, he spotted the driver of an approaching car wielding a firearm.

"My worst nightmare became a reality," he said. "I'm the middle of a gunfight and I have no way to defend myself."

In the months since, the self-described social butterfly steers clear of crowds and can only tolerate so much socializing. He still drives the same car, still riddled with bullet holes on the side panels, a bullet hole in the headrest of the passenger seat and the words "evidence" scrawled on the doors. His shoulder remains pocked with bullet fragments.

Asia

Kim calls for measures to protect North Korea's security

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called for his military and diplomats to prepare unspecified “offensive measures” to protect the country’s security and sovereignty, the North’s state media said on Monday, before his end-of-year deadline for the Trump administration to make major concessions to salvage a fragile nuclear diplomacy.

Kim during a ruling Workers’ Party meeting Sunday also “comprehensively and anatomically analyzed” problems arising in efforts to rebuild the North’s moribund economy and presented tasks for “urgently correcting the grave situation of the major industrial sectors,” the Korean Central News Agency said.

The plenary meeting of the party’s Central Committee, which began on Saturday, is being closely watched amid concerns that Kim could suspend his deadlocked nuclear negotiations with the United States and take a more confrontational approach by lifting a self-imposed moratorium on nuclear and long-range missile tests.

The North has said the meeting, which will continue for at least another day, is intended for discussions on overcoming “manifold and harsh trials and difficulties.”

Kim, who has said the North would pursue a “new path” if Washington persists with sanctions and pressure, is expected to announce major policy changes during his New Year’s address on Wednesday.

The KCNA report did not describe any decisions made at the meeting or mention any specific remarks by Kim about the United States.



In this Sunday, Dec. 29, 2019, photo provided Monday, Dec. 30, by the North Korean government, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un speaks during a Workers’ Party meeting in Pyongyang, North Korea. AP

The North’s official Rodong Simmun newspaper published photos of Kim, wearing a white dress shirt and horn-rimmed glasses, speaking from a podium as hundreds of government and military officials jotted down his comments.

“Emphasizing the need to take positive and offensive measures for fully ensuring the sovereignty and security of the country as required by the present situation, (Kim) indicated the duties of the fields of foreign affairs, munitions industry and armed forces

of the DPRK,” the agency said in its English report, referring to North Korea’s formal name, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

KCNA’s Korean-language report said Kim called for “active and offensive” measures.

Kim also “comprehensively and anatomically analyzed the problems arising in the overall state building including the state management and economic construction in the present time,” the agency said.

“He stressed the need to reason-

ably straighten the country’s economic work system and order and establish a strong discipline and presented the tasks for urgently correcting the grave situation of the major industrial sectors of the national economy,” the report said.

It added that Kim stressed the need for a “decisive” increase in agricultural production and gave out instructions for improving science, education and public health standards.

Lee Sang-min, a spokesman of South Korea’s Unification Ministry,

said Seoul is closely watching the North Korean party meeting, but he didn’t speculate on what Kim’s call for active and offensive security measures would have meant.

Cheong Seong-Chang, a senior analyst at South Korea’s private Sejong Institute, said it was the first time under Kim’s rule that a plenary meeting of the party’s Central Committee continued for more than a day.

Kim has an urgent need to make major policy changes in the face of persistent U.S.-led sanctions and pressure, especially with a global crackdown on North Korean labor exports further straining his broken economy, Cheong said.

It’s also likely that Kim during the party meeting reaffirmed a commitment to strengthen his nuclear and missile program, considering the commander of the North Korean army’s strategic force was seen during Saturday’s meeting, Cheong said.

Kim has met President Donald Trump three times in two years of high-stakes summitry, but the diplomacy has progressed little beyond their vague aspirational goal of a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula. At their last meeting in June, they agreed to resume talks. A working-level meeting in Sweden in October broke down with the North Koreans blaming their American counterparts for maintaining an “old stance and attitude.”

The North said earlier this month it conducted two “crucial” tests at its long-range rocket launch facility, raising speculation it has been developing a new long-range missile or preparing a satellite launch.

Sydney New Year’s fireworks to go ahead despite wildfires

PERTH, Australia (AP)—Sydney’s iconic New Year’s Eve fireworks will go ahead despite the wildfire crisis to show the world Australia’s resiliency, the prime minister said, while authorities on Sunday braced for conditions to deteriorate with high temperatures.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison also announced financial support for some volunteer firefighters in New South Wales, the state worst hit by wildfires ravaging the nation.

“The world looks at Sydney every single year and they look at our vibrancy, they look at our passion, they look at our success,” he said. “In the midst of the challenges that we face, subject to the safety considerations, I can think of no better time to express to the world just how optimistic and positive we are as a country.”

The City of Sydney Council gave the green light although fire authorities warned that the fireworks could be canceled if catastrophic conditions are declared.

Morrison said that eligible volunteer firefighters will receive 300 Australian dollars (\$209) a day, up to AU\$6,000 (\$4,190) in total, if called out to battle blazes for more than 10 days. The compensation focused on people who are self-employed or work for small and medium businesses.

“The early and prolonged nature of this fire season has made a call beyond what is typically made on our volunteer firefighters,” he said.

Morrison, who has been under pressure since taking a much criticized family vacation to Hawaii during the wildfire crisis, announced last week that volunteer firefighters from the federal public sector will receive paid leave entitlements.

The opposition Labor party has been pressing the government to consider widespread compensation for volunteer firefighters.

“A lot of everyone’s stunned, a lot of time away from work,” said Sean Warren, a volunteer firefighter for about seven years. “A lot of people are using up their annual leave as well. A lot of people are just missing their families ... they’ve skipped Christmas with their families and their grandchildren. So yeah, it’s a wide extreme of sacrifice that people have been putting in.”

Morrison said the compensation was necessary so that the New South Wales fires commissioner is in a position to continue to call out the volunteer force.

The program is expected to cost AU\$50 million (\$34.9 million) but will be uncapped with the first AU\$10 million (\$6.9 million) being

made available next month. Morrison said it would be offered to other states and territories requesting help.

Wildfires have also flared in Queensland, Victoria, Western Australia and South Australia.

New South Wales, the country’s most populous state, has received the brunt of the wildfire catastrophe, which has killed nine people nationwide and razed more than 1,000 homes in the past few months.

High temperatures in the country’s east are expected until the new year. Sydney’s western suburbs were set to hit 41 degrees Celsius (106 Fahrenheit) Sunday before peaking at 44 C (111 F) on Tuesday.

Fire danger in Sydney and northern New South Wales is currently at very high.

New South Wales Rural Fire Services Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said 85 fires were still burning across the state with almost half of them not contained.

“We’ve got some deteriorating weather conditions over the coming days, particularly Monday and worsening through to Tuesday,” he said.

An emergency warning was issued Sunday for Victoria’s east as conditions worsen. Melbourne, the state’s capital, was set to reach 43 C (109 F) on Monday.

Taiwan president: Island’s democracy under threat from China

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen said Sunday that the self-governing island’s democracy remains under direct threat from rival China, underscoring her calls for closer ties with the U.S. and other allies.

Tsai was speaking at a televised debate against Han Kuo-yu of the main opposition Nationalist Party and veteran politician James Soong of the People’s First Party. Elections for president and the legislature are set for Jan. 11. Most polls show Tsai leading in her quest for a second four-year term.

Tsai said she would preserve Taiwan’s freedoms and way of life, but would make no changes to the constitution or the island’s official name, the Republic of China, which moved its seat of government to Taipei, the island’s capital, following the Communist Party’s seizure of power on mainland China in 1949.

“Taiwan’s most pressing challenge arises from China’s expanding ambitions,” Tsai said. “The situation in our region is ever-more complex and Taiwan’s sovereignty—its free, democratic way

of life—is under threat of being stripped away and undermined.”

“We need to deepen and strengthen our international relations, and at present we are doing so in terms of economics and across the board with many countries,” she said.

Tsai’s governing Democratic Progressive Party currently holds a majority in the assembly, allowing her to pursue an agenda of economic reforms, partly intended to attract reinvestment from Taiwanese business groups based in China and elsewhere.

During the debate, Han furthered his claims of facing opposition from the mainstream media and accused Tsai’s backers of corruption. He described China’s threat to use military force to bring Taiwan under its control as an abstraction and defended his previous dealings with Chinese authorities as necessary to ensure Taiwan’s economic future.

“Don’t smear people. You love Taiwan? I love Taiwan also,” Han said. Soong, who commands a portion of the pro-China electorate, cast himself as a moderate who could bring political experience to the office.

World

US strikes hit Iraqi militia blamed in contractor's death

WASHINGTON (AP)—The U.S. carried out military strikes in Iraq and Syria targeting an Iranian-backed Iraqi militia blamed for a rocket attack that killed an American contractor, Defense Secretary Mark Esper said Sunday.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the strikes send the message that the U.S. will not tolerate actions by Iran that jeopardize American lives.

"Precision defensive strikes" were conducted against five sites of Kataeb Hezbollah, or Hezbollah Brigades, Defense Department spokesman Jonathan Hoffman said in a statement earlier Sunday.

The U.S. blames the militia for a rocket barrage Friday that killed a U.S. defense contractor at a military compound near Kirkuk, in northern Iraq. Officials said as many as 30 rockets were fired in Friday's assault.

Esper said the U.S. hit three of the militia's sites in western Iraq and two in eastern Syria, including weapon depots and the militia's command and control bases.

U.S. Air Force F-15 Strike Eagles carried out the strikes

and all the aircraft safely returned to their home base, Esper said. At the ammunition storage facilities that were struck, significant secondary explosions were observed.

Pompeo, Esper and Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, flew to Palm Beach, Florida, after the operation to brief President Donald Trump.

Esper said they discussed with Trump "other options that are available" to respond to Iran.

"I would note also that we will take additional actions as necessary to ensure that we act in our own self-defense and we deter further bad behavior from militia groups or from Iran," Esper, who was accompanied by Pompeo and Milley, said in a brief statement to reporters in a ballroom at Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort, where the president is on a more than two-week winter break.

The national security officials did not answer any questions.

Pompeo said the "decisive response" makes clear that the U.S. "will not stand for the Islamic Republic of Iran to take actions that put American men

and women in jeopardy."

Trump was at Mar-a-Lago but did not appear with his top national security officials. After Pompeo and Esper spoke, the president traveled to his private golf club in West Palm Beach. The White House did not immediately say why Trump returned to the club after spending nearly six hours there earlier Sunday.

Iraq's Joint Operations Command said in a statement that three U.S. airstrikes on Sunday evening Iraq time hit the headquarters of the Hezbollah Brigades at the Iraq-Syria border, killing four fighters.

Iraq's Hezbollah Brigades, a separate force from the Lebanese group Hezbollah, operate under the umbrella of the state-sanctioned militias known collectively as the Popular Mobilization Forces. Many of them are supported by Iran.

The Popular Mobilization Forces said Sunday that the U.S. strikes killed at least 19 of Kataeb Hezbollah's members.

Kataeb Hezbollah is led by Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, one of Iraq's most powerful men. He once battled U.S. troops and is now the deputy head of the

Popular Mobilization Forces.

In 2009, the State Department linked him to the elite Quds Force of Iran's Revolutionary Guard, designated a foreign terrorist organization by President Donald Trump earlier this year.

The U.S. maintains some 5,000 troops in Iraq. They are there based on an invitation by the Iraqi government to assist and train in the fight against the Islamic State group.

The militia strike and U.S. counter-strike come as months of political turmoil roil Iraq. About 500 people have died

in anti-government protests in recent months, most of them demonstrators killed by Iraqi security forces.

The mass uprisings prompted the resignation of Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi late last month. Abdul-Mahdi remains for now in a caretaker capacity.

Abdul-Mahdi had made no public comment on Friday's militia attack but condemned the U.S. retaliatory strike on Sunday. He called it a violation of Iraqi sovereignty and a "dangerous escalation that threatens the security of Iraq

and the region."

In a statement, Abdul-Mahdi said Defense Secretary Mark Esper had called him about a half-hour before the U.S. strikes to tell him of U.S. intentions to hit bases of the militia suspected of being behind Friday's rocket attack. Abdul-Mahdi said in the statement he asked Esper to call off U.S. retaliation plans.

The statement said Iraqi President Barham Salih also received advance notice from a U.S. diplomat, and also asked unsuccessfully for Americans to call off it off.

Somalia bombing kills dozens; airstrikes target militants

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP)—A truck bomb exploded at a busy security checkpoint in Somalia's capital Saturday morning, killing at least 78 people including many students, authorities said. It was the worst attack in Mogadishu since the devastating 2017 bombing that killed hundreds.

The explosion ripped through rush hour as Somalia returned to work after its weekend. At least 125 people were wounded, Aamin Ambulance service director Abdiquadir Abdulrahman said, and hundreds of Mogadishu residents donated blood in response to desperate appeals.

President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed condemned the attack as a "heinous act of terror" and blamed the local al-Shabab extremist group, which is linked to al-Qaida and whose reach has extended to deadly attacks on luxury malls and schools in neighboring Kenya.

On Sunday, U.S. military officials said three airstrikes conducted against al-Shabab militants in Somalia had killed four militants. The airstrikes came in coordination with the Somali government and, according to a U.S. military statement, targeted al-Shabab militants responsible for "terrorist acts against innocent Somali citizens."

U.S. Africa Command said an initial assessment

concluded that two airstrikes killed two militants and destroyed two vehicles in Qunyo Barrow, and that one airstrike killed two militants in Caliyoow Barrow.

The truck bombing on Saturday targeted a tax collection center, police Capt. Mohamed Hussein said, as a large plume of smoke rose above the capital.

Bodies lay on the ground amid the blackened skeletons of vehicles. At a hospital, families and friends picked through dozens of the dead, gingerly lifting sheets to peer at faces.

Most of those killed were university and other students returning to class, Mayor Omar Mohamud Mohamed said. Somalis mourned the deaths of so many young people in a country trying to rebuild itself after decades of conflict. Two Turkish brothers were among the dead, Somalia's foreign minister said, and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan condemned the attack.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but al-Shabab often carries out such attacks. The extremist group was pushed out of Mogadishu several years ago but continues to target high-profile areas such as checkpoints and hotels in the seaside city.

Al-Shabab is now able to make its own explosives, its "weapon of choice," United

Nations experts monitoring sanctions on Somalia said earlier this year. The group had previously relied on military-grade explosives captured during assaults on an African Union peacekeeping force.

Despite that advance in bomb-making, one security expert said the unlikely choice of target Saturday—a checkpoint at the western entrance to the capital—reflected al-Shabab's weakening capability to plan and execute attacks at will. Mogadishu recently introduced tougher security measures that Somali officials said make it more difficult to smuggle in explosives.

"It feels like they literally knew that their (car bomb) may not proceed through the checkpoint into the city undetected, considering the additional obstacles ahead, so bombing the busy checkpoint in a show of strength appeared to be an ideal decision," the Mogadishu-based Ahmed Barre told The Associated Press.

Al-Shabab was blamed for the truck bombing in Mogadishu in October 2017 that killed more than 500 people, but the group never claimed responsibility for the blast that led to widespread public outrage. Some analysts said al-Shabab didn't dare claim credit as its strategy of trying to sway public opinion by exposing government weakness had badly backfired.

FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY

†JERRY JESSE REYES



We, the family of the late †Jerry Jesse Reyes would like to invite all our families, relatives and friends to join us in prayers as we commemorate the First Death Anniversary of our beloved's passing unto eternal life.

Holy Mass of Intention is being offered at San Vicente Church at the following schedule:

Wednesday, January 1st, 2020	8:00am
Thursday, January 2nd, 2020	6:00am
Friday, January 3rd, 2020	6:00pm
Saturday, January 4th, 2020	5:30pm
Sunday, January 5th, 2020	6:00am
Monday, January 6th, 2020	6:00pm
Tuesday, January 7th, 2020	6:00am
Wednesday, January 8th, 2020	6:00pm
Thursday, January 9th, 2020	6:00am

*Your prayers and presence are greatly appreciated.
Thank You and Si Yu'us Ma'ase*

Joycelyn A. Techur, Children and Family

Putin thanks Trump for helping foil terrorist acts in Russia

MOSCOW (AP)—Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke with President Donald Trump on Sunday to thank him for information that Putin said helped Russia foil terrorist attacks over the New Year's holiday, the Kremlin said.

Putin thanked Trump "for information transmitted through the special ser-

vices that helped prevent the completion of terrorist acts in Russia," the Kremlin said in a brief statement posted on its website.

Based on the U.S. information, the Russian security forces detained two Russians suspected of preparing to carry out terrorist acts in St. Petersburg during the upcoming holiday, state news

agency Tass reported, citing the Federal Security Service.

The security service said it obtained the information from its "American partners." It said it seized material from the suspects that confirms they were preparing terrorist acts, with no further details.

There was no immediate comment from the White House.

Overdrive

2020 Toyota Highlander channels Camry's spirit

By MARK PHELAN
DETROIT FREE PRESS

SAN ANTONIO—The 2020 Toyota Highlander channels the spirit of the Camry mid-size sedan as Toyota shifts its focus from cars to SUVs. There's nothing flashy about the Highlander, but the mid-size SUV promises the characteristics that made Toyota a juggernaut: practicality, durability and resale value.

The new Highlander goes on sale in mid-December. Prices range from \$34,600 for a base front-drive model to \$50,200 for a loaded all-wheel-drive hybrid.

At 194.9 inches long, the 2020 Highlander is about 2.4 inches longer than the current model. Versus key competitors, it's 1.6 inches shorter than a Honda Pilot, about 4 inches shorter than a Ford Explorer and 9.4 inches shorter than a Chevrolet Traverse.

The Highlander's other competitors include the Hyundai Palisade, Kia Telluride, Mazda CX-9, Nissan Pathfinder, Subaru Ascent and Volkswagen Atlas.

The Highlander is Toyota's pitch to family buyers who are abandoning midsize sedans in favor of SUVs. But don't write the Camry off

yet. It remains Toyota's No. 2 seller in the U.S., behind the RAV4 compact SUV.

Driving impressions

I spent a day driving gasoline and hybrid Highlanders around the Hill Country in central Texas. The SUV is comfortable, with plenty of room in the front two rows of seats and a usable back seat. Laminated front side windows contribute to a quiet interior.

Cargo space behind the third row seat increases to 16 cubic feet. Useful, but smaller than the best competitors.

The front seat has simple controls and plenty of storage. The steering wheel has flush controls for cruise, audio and other functions. I expected the feature to be confusing compared to wheels that have elevated switches for the most frequently used functions, but it seems reasonably intuitive. Android Auto joins Apple CarPlay among standard features.

Most models have an 8-inch touch screen. The top of the line Platinum gets a 12.3-inch screen Toyota claims is the biggest in its class.

The ride and handling are competent, but don't draw attention to themselves. Brakes are large and sturdy.

NUTS & BOLTS

2020 Toyota Highlander at a glance

- Prices: \$34,600-\$50,200
- Seven- or eight-passenger, three-row, front- or all-wheel drive midsize SUV
- Produced in Princeton, Indiana.
- Gasoline drivetrain
 - 3.5L V-6
 - 295 horsepower @ 6,600 rpm; 263 pound-feet of torque @ 4,700
 - Eight-speed automatic transmission
 - EPA fuel economy rating (Regular gasoline)
 - Front-wheel drive: 20 mpg city/28 highway/23 combined.
 - All-wheel drive: 20/27/23
- Hybrid drivetrain
 - 2.5L four-cylinder + electric motor
 - 243 hp @ 6,000 rpm; 175 pound-feet of torque @ 4,400 rpm
 - Continuously variable automatic transmission
 - EPA fuel economy rating (Regular gasoline)
 - Front-wheel drive: 36 mpg city/35 highway/36 combined.
 - All-wheel drive: 35/34/35
- Dimensions
 - Wheelbase: 112.2 inches
 - Length: 194.4 inches
 - Width: 76 inches
 - Height: 68.1 inches
 - Curb weight: 4,145-4,595 pounds
 - Passenger volume: 141.3 cubic feet w/o sunroof; 136.1 w/panoramic
 - Cargo volume: 16 cubic feet behind third row

- Safety and driver assistance features
 - Forward collision alert and automatic braking
 - Pedestrian detection
 - Automatic high beams
 - Lane departure alert with steering intervention
 - Road sign recognition
 - Lane tracing assist
 - Blind spot alert
 - Cross traffic alert
 - Parking sensor
 - Hill start assist
 - Descent assist
 - Trailer sway control
- Available features
 - Head-up display
 - LED headlights and taillights
 - Wireless charging
 - Apple CarPlay
 - Android Auto
 - 12.3-inch touch screen on Platinum models.
 - 8-inch screens on others
 - Navigation
 - Bluetooth
 - Heated and ventilated front seats
 - Three-zone climate control
 - 1,200-watt JBL sound
 - Second-row bench or captain's seats
 - Push button start
 - Power tailgate
 - Wood trim
 - Perforated leather seats
 - 20-inch alloy wheels



The 2020 Toyota Highlander. (TOYOTA)

IN CELEBRATION OF HER NEW LIFE †Victoria Maria Nugam Camacho

Lovingly known as "Vickie"
Born to life: April 3, 1960 | Called to Eternal Life: December 25, 2019

In her Eternal life, she now joins:

- Father: †Ignatio Nugam
- Mother: †Teresita Marfel
- Father-in-Law: †Ignacio C. Camacho
- Mother-in-Law: †Dolores S.N. Camacho
- Siblings: †Peter Tithrow
†Sylvester Nugam
†John P. Nugam
- Brother-in-Law: †Francisco S.N. Camacho

Her beautiful spirit and memories will forever live in the hearts of:

- Promise Mother: Bertina Limuk
- Husband: David S.N. Camacho
- Children: †Roger N. Camacho (Ritaann Mae, David Julian, Maryann Raylene, Daviann Juana)
Rhonda C./Nicholas J. Gross (Victoria Jade, Phoenix Sapphire, Beatrice Pearl, Windsor Amethyst, Carver Javid)
Kelly N. Camacho/ Lina A. Lifoifoi (Torinett Marie (Eden Nevaeh), Kevin Joshua, Zion Stone, Zack Blaze, Zeph Rootz)
Daverrick N. Camacho/ Gina M. (Devin Gage, Giovonni Dru, Dezmon Gabriel, Giulian Drake)
Victorette N. Camacho/ Jonathan T. Blas (Nathanette Marie, Davierrin Tamiica)
Zyerlishida N. Camacho
Cozryanamae N. Camacho/ Floyd M. Mendiola (Ymani Darieus)

- Reared Children: Geneca T. Aguon
John Yifith
Gigo C. Tomokane
Sylvestia I. Nugam

Our beloved Victoria is survived by numerous siblings, brothers and sisters-in-law, godchildren, aunties, uncles, cousins, nieces, and nephews.

Daily mass of intention for the repose of her soul is being celebrated:

- Saturday: San Antonio Parish @ 6pm
- Sunday: San Antonio Parish @ 8am
- Monday: Saint Jude Parish @ 6pm
- Tuesday: San Antonio Parish @ 6pm
- Wednesday: San Antonio Parish @ 8am

Funeral services will be held on Thursday, January 2, 2020. At 7:30am, after the viewing by immediate family members, her remains will be escorted from the Borja Funeral Home to San Antonio Parish. Responso Service and prayers will take place upon arrival. Mass of Christian Burial at 10am followed by Interment Services at the Chalan Kanoa Cemetery where she will be peacefully laid to rest.

Un dangkulu na si yu'us ma'ase
David S.N. Camacho & Children

Life & Style

NEW YORK (AP)—A common but increasingly mighty and very busy little word, “they,” has an accolade all its own.

The language mavens at Merriam-Webster have declared the personal pronoun their word of the year based on a 313% increase in look-ups on the company’s search site, Merriam-Webster.com, this year when compared with 2018.

“I have to say it’s surprising to me,” said Peter Sokolowski, a lexicographer and Merriam-Webster’s editor at large, ahead of Tuesday’s announcement. “It’s a word we all know and love. So many people were talking about this word.”

Sokolowski and his team monitor spikes in searches and “they” got an early start last January with the rise of model Oslo Grace on top fashion runways. The Northern Californian identifies as transgender nonbinary, walking in both men’s and women’s shows around the world.

Another look-up spike occurred in April, when U.S. Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Washington, got emotional while talking of her gender-nonconforming child during a House committee hearing as she advocated for LGBTQ rights legislation.

Merriam-Webster recently added a new definition to its online dictionary to reflect use of “they” as relating to a

person whose gender identity is nonbinary. In October, the American Psychological Association endorsed “they” as a singular third-person pronoun in its latest style guide for scholarly writing.

“We believe writers should try to use a person’s self-identified pronoun whenever feasible,” said Jasper Simons, chief publishing officer for the APA. “The singular ‘they’ is a way for writers to avoid making assumptions about gender when it is not known.”

The American Dialect Society, which is dedicated to the study of the English language in North America, named “they” its word of the year for 2015, in recognition of its emergence among people who reject “he” and “she.”

In September, Merriam-Webster experienced another big increase in look-ups for “they” when pop star Sam Smith wrote on social media that their preferred pronouns were “they” and “them.” Smith said the decision came after a “lifetime of being at war with my gender.”

Sokolowski told The Associated Press that “they,” one of a handful of nonbinary pronouns to emerge in recent years, is “here to stay.” Nick Adams, director of transgender representation for the LGBTQ advocacy group GLAAD, said Merriam-Webster’s choice is a

Merriam-Webster declares ‘they’ its 2019 word of the year

positive step in acknowledging nonbinary people.

“There is a long road ahead before language, policy and culture are completely affirming and inclusive,” Adams said.

The AP Stylebook allows the use of “they” as a singular or gender-neutral pronoun in

some cases.

And the Merriam-Webster runners-up to word of the year?

They include “quid pro quo,” “impeach” and “crawdad,” the latter a word in the title of Delia Evans best-selling novel, “Where the Crawdads Sing.” The Top 10 also included “egregious,” “clem-

ency” and “the,” a shocker of a look-up spike when Ohio State University attempted to patent the word to protect its turf. It failed.

Also in the mix: “snitty,” which emerged on the lips of Attorney General William Barr in reference to a letter by Robert Mueller about a summary Barr

wrote of the Mueller report.

We have Washington Post columnist George Will to thank for “tergiversation.” The word, meaning an evasion or a desertion, was Merriam-Webster’s top look-up on Jan. 24 after Will used it in a column in reference to Lindsey Graham.

Let’s cancel ‘OK Boomer’ in 2020, and the humblebrag too

NEW YORK (AP)—Either loudly sing your own praises or don’t in the new year, but let’s leave the humble brag behind, along with a few other oversaturated, cloying or just plain silly cultural quirks that deserve a big goodbye.

Among them are pop-up shops, cancel culture and the ever-present “OK Boomer” retort on social media. With much ado about something, here’s our annual Over It list of things that should remain in 2019:

DOUBLE-WRISTING

Wearing two timepieces has been around since the 18-century dandy and his double pocket watches, intended to

culturally elevate as opposed to making sure he was really, really on time. Later, Marlon Brando pulled off the two-wrist tango but, you know, he was Brando. Young celebs have caught on, Chris Pratt, Johnny Depp and Drake included. These days it’s all about the digital add-on, plus a statement piece. Can you see our side eyes?

EMAIL RECEIPTS

Firstly, huge thanks for your out of office responses. Those are gold, but please stop asking for receipts. Learn to live with the suspense like the rest of us as to when we read or do not read your missives, either email, text or otherwise. The same goes for

when we most likely do or perchance do not delete said missives at our convenience. Our inbox. Our rules. Keep your curiosity and aggressive email tactics to yourself.

HUMBLE-BRAGATHON

For the truly humble, we appreciate you. For the passive-aggressive, not so much. Merriam-Webster sums up the humblebrag nicely: “To make a seemingly modest, self-critical, or casual statement or reference that is meant to draw attention to one’s admirable or impressive qualities or achievement.” Just own yourself. The dictionary titans say the term has been around since 2002. It was later popularized by the comedian, TV producer and writer Harris Wittels, who died in 2015.

POP-UPS

There’s one for ketchup. There’s one for ice cream. There’s one for “Friends.” There are tons with the sole mission of selling you merch, as opposed to selling you merch while also being mildly entertaining. The Business of Fashion notes that Amazon and other digital disruptors have contributed to traditional retailers closing thousands of stores. The prime but empty real estate is up for grabs on short-term leases for ever-rotating tenants. Pop-ups are now a “strategy” on both ends, from commercial land barons to the sellers of goods, luxury to goofy. Some aren’t mad about it. We’re all popped out.

CANCEL THE CANCELERS

There’s nothing wrong with calling out bad behavior, a bad person or bad practices, especially the kind that are truly threatening and make people feel unsafe. There is most definitely something wrong with the mob mentality that swirls on social media unchecked. The cancel culture is often stoked by sheeple with no interest in drilling down to

truths. Mean for mean’s sake or 100 percent willing to gulp gossip is not cool. We say, think before you cancel. We need cancel truth. Unite!

BOOMER BACKLASH

Once upon a time in Meme-land there was an older dude who trashed Millennials and Gen-Zers for Peter Pan syndrome. For that, younger folks have declared 2019 the year of “OK, Boomer,” as in Baby Boomer. Not that the yoots and their pejorative for intransigence, intolerance and tech phobia among their elders is entirely wrong, mind you. It’s just time to calm down a bit. The phrase “OK, Boomer” has a richer history. As the legend goes, it surfaced on Reddit in 2009 and on 4chan in 2015. According to The Boston Globe, TikTok videos with the “OkBoomer” tag have been watched more than 44 million times and counting.

INFLUENCER FATIGUE

Is it the end of the line for influencers? Greg Petro, writing for Forbes.com, declared in November: “Consumers, especially younger ones, are losing trust in paid influencers and looking instead to organic grassroots communities where their like-minded peers are sharing content and commentary about brands and products they actually love.” Rock on, Greg! Side note, exactly how many followers does one need to score an influencer gig? Asking for a friend.

REVIEWS AND SURVEYS

Everybody is looking for feedback of all kinds, all the time. Don’t be so needy! Just send the toilet brush. Your survey doesn’t just take “a minute.” You have all the reviews you need. If we had something to say, we’d say it. We’re putting the incessant requests for service and purchase reviews and surveys high on the annoying list alongside the onslaught of robocalls.

‘Skywalker’ rises again; ‘Little Women’ go big at box office

LOS ANGELES (AP)—“Star Wars” was still rising in the last weekend of the year, while “Little Women” broke big at the box office.

“Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker” brought in \$72 million over the weekend to remain the top-earning film in North America by light-years, according to studio estimates Sunday.

In 10 days of release it has brought in \$362.8 million for Disney, falling just short of the earnings of its predecessor, 2017’s “Star Wars: The Last Jedi” in a comparable span.

Helped by the Christmas holiday week, “Star Wars” had a smaller-than-average 59% drop-off in its second weekend after earning \$175 million in its first.

“For a movie that opened that big, that is a modest drop,” said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for Comscore. “Movies that open this time of year, they usually have legs.”

Sony’s “Jumanji: The Next Level,” earned \$35.3 million for second place and has tallied a total of \$175.5 million through its third weekend of release.

Director Greta Gerwig’s re-imagining of the American literary classic “Little Women” had a \$16.5-million weekend and a five-day

total of \$29 million since its Christmas opening, a major performance for a smaller-audience film with a budget dwarfed by the top two films.

1. “Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker,” \$72 million, (\$94.3 million international).	\$13.2 million, (\$16 million international).
2. “Jumanji: The Next Level,” \$35.3 million (\$61.6 million international).	6. “Knives Out,” \$9.7 million (\$6 million international).
3. “Little Women,” \$16.5 million, (\$6.3 million international).	7. “Uncut Gems,” \$9.6 million.
4. “Frozen 2,” \$16.5 million, (\$42.2 million international).	8. “Cats,” \$4.83 million, (\$13.6 million international).
5. “Spies in Disguise,”	9. “Bombshell,” \$4.7 million, (\$157,000 international).
	10. “Richard Jewell,” \$3 million.



This image released by Lucasfilm shows Adam Driver as Kylo Ren, left, and Daisy Ridley as Rey in a scene from “Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker.” LUCASFILM VIA AP

Here's why Madonna canceled her Miami concert

By Howard Cohen
MIAMI HERALD

MIAMI—Madonna fans who showed up for the closing date of her Miami Beach run of concerts on Sunday night were “outraged” to learn that the diva canceled the show with less than two hours’ notice and with little to no explanation.

According to Ticket News and other reports, a reason for Madonna’s cancellation was not clearly given to disgruntled ticket holders who were at the seventh and final date of her Madame X residency at the Fillmore Miami Beach.

Finally, on Christmas, three days after the cancellation, Madonna took to her Instagram account to explain why she had to back out of her performance.

A knee injury was causing her great pain. She’s an athletic performer. Bum knee, and the dancer-turned-pop-singer can’t get into the groove like she did in the ‘80s.

MADONNA’S EXPLANATION

“As I climbed the ladder to sing ‘Batuka’ on Saturday night in Miami I was in tears from the pain of my injuries, which has been indescribable for the past few days,” the 61-year-old singer said on her Instagram post.

“With every song I sang, I said a prayer that I would make it to the next and get thru the show,” her post continued.

Just like a prayer, she made it through Saturday’s late-night concert, she said.

“I consider myself a warrior,” she said. “However this time I have to listen to my body and accept that my pain is a warning. I want to say how deeply sorry I am to all my fans. For having to cancel my last show. I spent the last two days with doctors. Scans, ultra sounds, Xrays. Poking and probing and more tears. They have made it very clear to me that if I am to continue my tour I must rest for as long as possible so that I don’t inflict further and irreversible damage to my body.”

“I have never let an injury stop me from performing but this time I have to accept that there is no shame in being human and having to press the pause button.”

Madonna did cancel three dates in Boston in November because of pain, CNN reported. And in October she also postponed a concert date in New York because of the knee pain, Madonna’s Madame X tour website posted.

MADONNA FANS OUTRAGE

But many fans preceded her social media explanation by turning to their own social media to blast Madonna for a tour in which mistreating fans is as much a part of her concert experience as the encores.

“When you treat your fans like they are disposable, you become disposable. Bye Madonna,” tweeted a woman who said she traveled from Atlanta to Miami for the closing concert.

Another fan, who had tickets for a Madonna Madame X concert in Boston that got canceled in November tried

again in Miami Beach. She was foiled again.

“My husband knew how disappointed I was to not see you, so for Christmas he bought tickets to your show in Miami, flights, and a hotel for the weekend so I could see you and you cancel AGAIN,” she wrote.

TOUR LAWSUIT, AC OFF

Madonna’s apology comes on the heels of a tour that has led to its share of outrages.

In November, a fan, Nate Hollander, filed a class action suit in Miami-Dade County court suing both Madonna and concert promoter Live Nation, which changed the time of her Dec. 17 show at The Fillmore Miami Beach.

As on previous tours, Madonna takes to the stage hours late past the printed start time on her concert tickets.

Fans at Madame X dates also were irritated by another Madonna demand—that air conditioners in the venues she performs in have to be turned to a high temperature or off so that she can perform in the heat. She’s done that, too, on previous arena tours in South Florida.

This time, she said she needed to perform in warm rooms because of her knee injury. When fans started chanting “AC! AC! AC!” during the Madame X Miami opener on Dec. 14, the star cursed her audience, according to *Miami New Times*.

“F--- you! I’m cold,” the singer responded. “Take your f---ing clothes off,” she continued, hinting the high temperature eased the

physical pain that prompted her to cancel three tour dates in Boston less than a month ago,” *Miami New Times* reported.

A letter was also published in the *Miami Herald* this week from a disgruntled concertgoer who thought—inaccurately—that the Fillmore’s AC was broken.

“We saw Madonna at the Fillmore in Miami Beach on December 14, 2019. Yeah it started more than 3 hours late as others have complained about but we were prepared for that thanks to a last minute email from Ticketmaster. What we were not prepared for was a broken air conditioning system. It was miserable ... truly. At one point fans were chanting “AC, AC, AC.” Madonna said ‘What ... take your clothes off!’ It was really difficult to enjoy the show when you could not breath. Very disappointing.”

MADAME X TOUR RESUMES

The concert was also the close of the North American leg of this residency tour. Madonna performs multiple dates in the same city at halls that hold about 2,000 to 3,000 people rather than the 20,000-capacity arenas or football stadiums where she usually stages her concert spectacles.

There is no announced makeup date for the canceled Miami Beach date. Fans were offered refunds on their Ticketmaster tickets.

The Madame X Tour resumes Jan. 27 for a 10-night run at The London Palladium in England, according to Ticketmaster.

Efron: ‘I bounced back’ from illness in Papua New Guinea

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Zac Efron said he has “bounced back” after an illness while filming a show in Papua New Guinea.

On his Twitter and Instagram accounts Sunday, the 32-year-old “High School Musical” actor addressed recent media reports that he had been rushed to the hospital in a serious emergency while filming his new reality adventure series, “Killing Zac Efron.”

“Very thankful to everyone who has reached out. I did get

sick in Papua New Guinea but I bounced back quick and finished an amazing 3 weeks in P.N.G.,” Efron said along with a picture of himself smiling and waving amid a group of local children.

He gave no details on what the sickness had been or what treatment he underwent.

“I’m home for the holidays with my friends and family,” Efron said. “Thanks for all the love and concern, see you in 2020!”

Actress Sara Gilbert separates from wife, singer Linda Perry

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Actress Sara Gilbert has filed for legal separation from her wife of five years, singer and songwriter Linda Perry.

Gilbert filed the separation documents in Los Angeles Superior Court on Friday. The papers cite irreconcilable differences as the reason for the split, and requests that neither woman receive spousal support.

No details were given on

custody arrangements for the couple’s 4-year-old son Rhodes.

Gilbert, 44-year-old star of “The Conners,” former star of “Roseanne” and creator and former co-host of daytime talk show “The Talk,” began dating Perry in 2011 and they married in 2014.

Perry is the 54-year-old former singer of 4 Non Blondes who has written hits for Christina Aguilera, Gwen Stefani and Pink.



In this Jan. 6, 2019, file photo, Sara Gilbert, left, and Linda Perry arrive at the 76th annual Golden Globe Awards at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif.

Bride-to-be attempts to keep costs and hurt feelings down

DEAR ABBY: I have an awkward wedding conundrum I hope you can help me with. I am getting married in April and want to invite two co-workers with whom I am very close. One of them is married; the other, "Sara," is in the process of divorcing her husband. Sara was unhappy for years with her almost ex-husband, and we witnessed the deterioration of their marriage over several years.

About a year ago, while still married, Sara began an affair. She's still "seeing" this man—sneaking out, meeting him on his lunch break, going to motels—while she goes through the divorce process. She considers them to have been a couple for the past year.

I'm keeping a very tight grip on my guest list to control the costs. I don't want to pass judgment on Sara, but I don't think her situation at present qualifies as a true, committed relationship, which is the parameter I set when deciding who gets to bring a plus-one. I also don't want my wedding to be the event where she "debuts" her new man.

I know she will feel slighted because in her mind he's her boyfriend, and they are a couple. I have met him only once, but because they have been so secretive, he's a complete stranger to me. Sara may resent that I invited our other co-worker's husband and not her "boyfriend." Is there a way I can handle this tactfully?

BEWILDERED BRIDE

DEAR BEWILDERED: If you invite one close co-worker's significant other and exclude the other, there are guar-

anteed to be hurt feelings. If you explain that you don't feel she is in a committed relationship (after a year!), you will get yourself deeper into hot water because she will be insulted. Believe me, if you do what you are considering, it's going to cost you far more than the price of two dinners.

DEAR ABBY: I'm a 67-year-old woman. I've been single all my life but now wish I could find a companion to share my later years with. My problem is, I'm not interested in a sexual relationship. I have never been good at the physical part of intimacy. As a result, I've had limited experience and not much luck with men. When I was younger, I had a reasonably healthy sexual appetite, but couldn't seem to do "the act" right, although I enjoyed the prelude.

My idea of a relationship now would be with a kind, supportive man who likes to dance and enjoy life, but who's OK with no sex. Is this a reasonable expectation at my age, or should I just give it all up? I don't even know how I'd go about finding such a partner without fearing I'd have to prove myself and experience more loss.

Incidentally, I had counseling years ago about other issues, and the strong possibility arose about childhood sexual abuse, but it was vague and not resolved.

WANTING THIS BUT NOT THAT

DEAR WANTING: I can't guarantee that you will find a partner, but there is a website for asexual people that offers a lot of information as well as a way to connect with

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

the rest of the "ace" (short for "asexual") community. Its members call it AVEN, which stands for Asexual Visibility and Education Network. It can be found at asexuality.org. You and many others may find it helpful, and I wish you luck in your quest to find a loving relationship.

DEAR READERS: Well, contentious 2019 is at an end! Please accept my heartfelt good wishes for a happy, healthy and successful 2020. And if you plan to be out partying tonight to ring in the New Year, please be sure you have appropriate transportation arrangements and be safe!

LOVE, ABBY

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



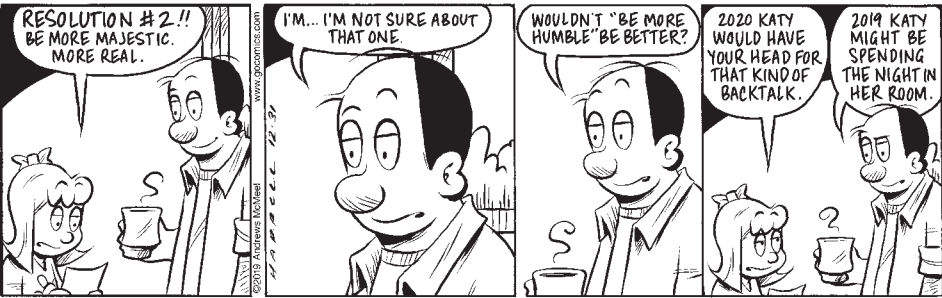
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



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By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 36 Video chat format 38 Regret 39 Bill's partner 40 Tempest 43 "Doonesbury" cartoonist Garry 47 Loyal 49 Egyptian deity 50 Takes courses? 51 Broadway's Hagen 52 Seniors' org. 53 Gamer's title 54 Chewable stick 55 Smooch

DOWN 23 Bygone jet 24 "Ben- —" 25 Ostrich's kin 26 Plaything 27 Singer Starr 28 Mentalist's gift 29 Arctic explorer John 31 Tennis feat 34 Collar 35 Feeling no pain 36 Old French coin 37 Alaskan bear 39 Coffee add-in 40 Goblet feature 41 Tea carrier 42 Failed at-bats 43 Ballet attire 44 Actor Morales 45 Broadcasts 46 Priority Mail org. 48 Schlep

Solution time: 22 mins.

Yesterdays answer 12-31

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Joey McIntyre, 47; Val Kilmer, 60; Bebe Neuwirth, 61; Anthony Hopkins, 82.

Happy Birthday: Look for opportunities, and something of interest will surface. A change will make it easier to take advantage of an exciting prospect. Don't allow uncertainty or confusion to set in when it comes to where or how you live. Do whatever it takes to reach your destination of choice. Someone from your past will play a role in the future. Your numbers are 3, 13, 16, 22, 29, 34, 49.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Think about what others say. Reveal little, mull over the information you gather and watch to see how others respond. Keep your plans simple, moderate and geared toward spending time with someone you love. Romance is in the stars. ***

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Refuse to let a decision someone makes bother you. Close the year on a high note by surrounding yourself with people who share your likes, dislikes and plans. Expand your circle of friends, and enjoy the end-of-year festivities. ***

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Engage in activities that will allow you to mingle with people you'd like to collaborate with next year. Now is not the time to do business, but it is the perfect opportunity to know people better. Listen and learn. **

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Bring in the new year in a unique manner. Spending time with people who help stretch

your mind and encourage you to take better care of yourself will help you start a lifelong routine that makes you feel and look your best. *****

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You may be all wired up and eager to go, but erratic behavior will not end well. Take a step back and choose a quieter venue, or consider staying at home with someone whose company you enjoy. ***

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Be honest with yourself and others when it comes to your New Year's resolution. If you want to make a change, do so openly and wholeheartedly. However, don't try to pressure others to follow you; do your own thing. ***

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Align yourself with people who bring out the best in you, not those who put you down or hold you back. Concentrate on you, the things you like and enjoy, and the people you know you can trust to be supportive. ***

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): A change is in your best interest. Listen to what others have to say, but do what's best for you. A direction that allows you to use your skills uniquely will encourage you to live life your way. New beginnings look promising. *****

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Be careful when dealing with sensitive issues. Someone is likely to be deceptive regarding a situation that can influence a decision you need to make. Don't trust anyone but yourself. Make decisions based on your needs, not what someone else wants. **

EUGENIA LAST THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Sit up and take note of what everyone is doing. Don't feel you have to follow the crowd. Set your plans in motion; appreciation for what you have to offer will be yours. Be a leader, and you'll rewrite your destiny. ****

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Put greater emphasis on your health and relationships. A physical change will lift your spirits and get you in the mood to bring in the new year with the people who mean the most to you. ***

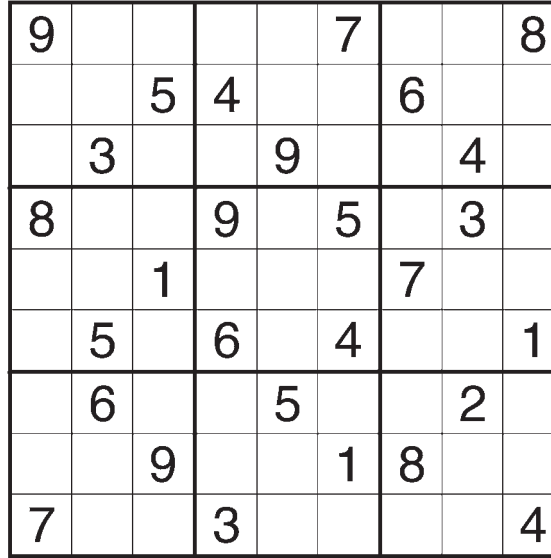
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Emotions will be close to the surface. Observe more, and choose your words wisely. A change that takes place will end up being to your benefit, so don't make an unnecessary fuss. Let things unfold naturally. ***

Birthday Baby: You are articulate, courageous and insightful. You are original and adaptable.

Visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn. Copyright 2019 Andrews McMeel Syndication

SUDOKU

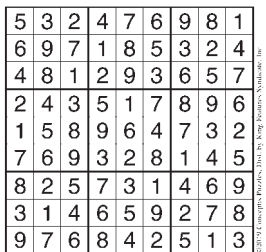
Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green



Difficulty Level ★★ 12/31

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterdays Answer



Difficulty Level ★ 12/30

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

MAKING RESOLUTIONS Solution: 4 letters

N H P O S I T I V E N O H P H
R S R R A D N E L A C E L L O
A I O F I R E W O R K S T E P
E L M A A C H I E V E J R E E
L P I E R L O L I F E O E D S
Y M S V V D A O I P P U E U E
T O E O E C E U K L P R T C G
S C G M C T L R G E L N N A N
H C H A N G E D I H A A U T I
A A D A P T O A N P N L L I E
P R B M A N A G E I S K O O B
P E D I A D N U F D F A V N L
Y E A T T R A D I T I O N S L
D R E A M S T R A T E G I Z E
P A R T Y H T L A E H T A E W

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Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500 Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cpa.gov.mp

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 07-2019
Opening date: December 20, 2019 Closing date: January 10, 2020

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Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions shall be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.tenorio@cpa.gov.mp or hrspecialist@cpa.gov.mp or by phone at (670)237-6500.

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Dolphins send Patriots to wild-card game



FOXBOROUGH, Mass. (AP)—Miami dropped defending Super Bowl champion New England into the wild-card playoff round when Ryan Fitzpatrick tossed a 5-yard touchdown pass to tight end Mike Gesicki with 24 seconds remaining for a stunning 27-24 victory Sunday.

New England (12-4) will have to play in the opening weekend of the postseason for the first time since 2009. The Patriots never have made the Super Bowl while playing in the wild-card round. They will host Tennessee next Saturday night.

The Patriots won their first eight games, the split the next eight, including the rarity of two losses at home.

It is the second straight season the Dolphins have denied the Patriots an unbeaten division record. They scored on a wild series of laterals on the final play in their second meeting last season, in Miami.

After trailing throughout the game, Tom Brady threw a 13-yard touchdown pass to James White to put New England in front 24-20 with 3:53 left. But Fitzpatrick, who finished 28 of 41 for 320 yards and a touchdown, was unflappable, leading Miami on a 13-play, 75-yard drive that included him recovering a fumbled snap, and completing a 24-yard pass to DeVante Parker for Miami (5-11).

Chiefs 31, Chargers 21

In Kansas City, Mecole Hardman returned a kickoff 104 yards for a touchdown, Damien Williams took a hand-off 84 yards for another score, and the Chiefs leapfrogged New England for the No. 2 seed in the AFC and a first-round playoff bye.

The Chiefs (12-4) long ago clinched their fourth straight AFC West title, but they needed a win and an unlikely Dolphins victory over the Patriots to get a week off. And just as Williams punched into the end zone in the closing minutes for his second touchdown of the game, the Dolphins were scoring the go-ahead TD with 24 seconds left for their upset in Foxborough.

Eagles 34, Giants 17

In East Rutherford, Carson Wentz and the Philadelphia Eagles are heading to the playoffs thanks to a group of players off the practice squad.

Boston Scott ran for three touchdowns in the second half and the injury-ravaged Eagles beat the Giants to win the NFC East title.

Philadelphia hosts Seattle



MIAMI Dolphins tight end Mike Gesicki, left, catches the winning touchdown pass in front of New England Patriots safety Patrick Chung in the second half of an NFL game, Sunday, Dec. 29, 2019, in Foxborough, Mass.

palatial SoFi Stadium in Inglewood next season.

Bears 21, Vikings 19

In Minneapolis, Eddy Pineiro's fourth field goal of the game for Chicago came from 22 yards with 10 seconds left with the Vikings resting their regulars for the playoffs.

Pineiro, the latest attempt by the Bears (8-8) to solve their persistent kicking trouble, finished the season with 11 straight made field goals. Mitch Trubisky highlighted another unremarkable performance by hitting Riley Ridley for 34 yards on fourth-and-9 with 2:36 left from midfield to set up the winning kick.

Bengals 33, Browns 23

In Cincinnati, Andy Dalton threw for a touchdown and ran for another in his farewell as a franchise quarterback—a Joe Burrow banner in the upper deck reminded him what comes next—and the Bengals ended one of their most miserable seasons with a victory.

Ohio's two professional football teams wrapped up another fruitless year together and set course for an offseason of potentially big changes.

Falcons 28, Buccaneers 22, OT

In Tampa Bay, Deion Jones intercepted Jameis Winston on the first play of overtime and returned the ball 27 yards for a touchdown.

Winston became the first Tampa Bay quarterback to pass for 5,000 yards in a season, but another non-playoff year ended on a sour note. The Falcons (7-9) tied the game with a field goal on the last play of regulation and won for the sixth time in eight games when Jones became the seventh opposing player to score on a pick-6 off Winston this season.

Jets 13, Bills 6

In New York, Sam Darnold hit Jamison Crowder for a 1-yard touchdown pass in the fourth quarter, and the Jets avoided finishing their fourth consecutive season with double-digit losses in a win over Buffalo's backups.

The Jets missed the playoffs for a ninth consecutive season, but finished at 7-9 under first-year coach Adam Gase for their best record since going 10-6 in 2015.

(11-5) in a wild-card game next Sunday.

Already missing three starting wide receivers for the fourth straight game, the Eagles also began the game without Pro Bowl tight end Zach Ertz and right tackle Lane Johnson.

Then they lost running back Miles Sanders and three-time Pro Bowl right guard Brandon Brooks in the first half.

Titans 35, Texans 14

In Houston, Derrick Henry and the Titans ran their way into the playoffs, beating a the Texans team that rested several starters, and setting up an intriguing first-round matchup with New England.

Henry rushed for a season-high 211 yards and three touchdowns. The Texans beat the Titans two weeks ago to take control of the AFC South and locked up the division last week, allowing Houston (10-6) to sit quarterback Deshaun Watson and other key players.

Tennessee (9-7) got its first win at Houston since Jan. 1, 2012. The Titans are in the postseason for the second time in three seasons and the first under coach Mike Vrabel, who played for New England for eight seasons.

49ers 26, Seahawks 21

In Seattle, the 49ers won the NFC West and the No. 1 seed when Jacob Hollister was stopped by rookie linebacker Dre Greenlaw on fourth-and-goal just inches short of the goal line. San

Francisco claimed its first division crown since 2012 and wrapped up home-field advantage throughout the NFC playoffs by silencing a crowd that showed up looking for a division title and to celebrate the return of Marshawn Lynch.

But it took a replay review for San Francisco to finally have its title.

Cowboys 47, Redskins 16

In Arlington, Dak Prescott threw four touchdown passes in a win rendered meaningless when the Cowboys were eliminated from the playoffs by Philadelphia's victory.

The Cowboys (8-8) lost control of their playoff future with a 17-9 loss at the Eagles last week. Last season's NFC East champions will now wait to see how much longer Jason Garrett will be coach after underachieving in the final year of his contract.

Packers 23, Lions 20

In Detroit, Mason Crosby kicked a 33-yard field goal as time expired, lifting the Packers to a first-round bye.

The Packers (13-3) fell behind by two touchdowns in the second quarter. They didn't lead until Crosby made his second winning kick against Detroit this season.

The Lions (3-12-1) closed with nine straight losses for their longest losing streak in a season since going 0-16 in 2008.

Saints 42, Panthers 10

In Charlotte, the Saints took care of business against the reeling

Panthers and finished off a 13-3 regular season but still have to host Minnesota next Sunday in a wild-card game.

Drew Brees threw for 253 yards and three touchdowns, Alvin Kamara ran for two scores and the Saints handed the Panthers their eighth straight loss. But the runaway NFC South champions' chances at home-field advantage throughout the NFC playoffs ended when Green Bay beat Detroit on a last-second field goal.

Ravens 28, Steelers 10

In Baltimore, Slogging through the rain without several notable stars and with very little at stake, the Ravens relied on a strong defensive performance to finish the regular season riding a 12-game winning streak.

Baltimore's first touchdown followed a fumble by Steelers rookie quarterback Devlin Hodges, who failed to generate any offense in a game that meant far more to Pittsburgh (8-8) than to the Ravens (14-2).

Broncos 16, Raiders 15

In Denver, Shelby Harris knocked down Derek Carr's 2-point pass to Hunter Renfrow with 7 seconds left and the Broncos put an end to Oakland's run as an NFL city.

The Raiders (7-9) nearly made the Broncos (7-9) pay dearly for Garrett Bolles' latest penalty, a personal foul that pushed Brandon McManus way back for a 57-yard field-goal attempt, which sailed

wide left, giving Oakland the ball at its 45-yard line with 1:41 remaining.

Carr hit Renfrow for the touchdown from the 3, the first time the Raiders reached the end zone in five red-zone trips. Coach Jon Gruden went for the 2-point conversion instead of the tie.

Jaguars 38, Colts 20

In Florida, Gardner Minshew turned in his best performance in two months, throwing for 295 yards and three touchdowns. The rookie closed out Jacksonville's disappointing season by strengthening his case to be the team's starting quarterback next season. Coach Doug Marrone might be around, too.

Marrone's status has been unclear since team owner Shad Khan fired top executive Tom Coughlin last week. Khan will meet with Marrone, general manager Dave Caldwell and others in the coming days before deciding anyone's fate.

Rams 31, Cardinals 24

In Los Angeles, Tyler Higbee and Robert Woods caught touchdown passes from Jared Goff in the fourth quarter, and the Rams bade farewell to the Los Angeles Coliseum and secured their third straight winning season.

Goff passed for 319 yards and hit Cooper Kupp for 99 yards and an early TD, while the Los Angeles defense made four takeaways in the final NFL game at the 96-year-old Coliseum. The Rams (9-7) are moving into

LeBron, Serena named Athletes of the Decade

NEW YORK (AP)—He left Cleveland for Miami, finally became a champion, went back to his beloved northeast Ohio, delivered on another title promise, then left for the Los Angeles Lakers and the next challenge. He played in eight straight finals. No NBA player won more games or more MVP awards over the last 10 years than he did. He started a school. He married his high school sweetheart.

“That’s all?” LeBron James asked, feigning disbelief.

No, that’s not all. Those were just some highlights of the last 10 years. There were many more, as the man called “King” spent the last decade reigning over all others—with no signs of slowing down.

James is The Associated Press male athlete of the decade, adding his name to a list that includes Tiger Woods, Wayne Gretzky and Arnold Palmer. He was a runaway winner in a vote of AP member sports editors and AP beat writers, easily outpacing runner-up Tom Brady of the New England Patriots.

“You add another 10 years of learning and adversity, pitfalls, good, great, bad, and any smart person who wants to grow will learn from all those experiences,” James, who turns 35 Monday, told the AP. “A decade ago, I just turned 25. I’m about to be 35 and I’m just in a better (place) in my life and have a better understanding of what I want to get out of life.”

Usain Bolt of Jamaica was third for dominating the sprints at the 2012 and 2016 Olympics, soccer superstar Lionel Messi was fourth and Michael Phelps—the U.S. swimmer who retired as history’s most decorated Olympian with 28 medals, 23 gold—was fifth.

James was revealed as the winner Sunday, one day af-



AP
Los Angeles Lakers’ LeBron James, left, and Serena Williams are named AP Athletes of the Decade.

ter Serena Williams was announced as the AP’s female athlete of the decade. In his 17th season, he’s on pace to lead the league in assists for the first time while remaining among the NBA’s scoring leaders.

“When LeBron James is involved,” Denver coach Michael Malone said, “I’m never surprised.”

Including playoffs, no one in the NBA scored more points than James in the last 10 years. He started the decade 124th on the league’s all-time scoring list. He’s now about to pass Kobe Bryant for No. 3. No. 2 Karl Malone and No. 1 Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

are within reach.

Is Abdul-Jabbar in his sights? Is catching him the new decade’s goal?

“I would be lying if I said I don’t see it,” James said. “Obviously I’m not trying to say, ‘OK, well if I play this amount of time, if I average this’ ... I’m not doing that because I’ve never done that with my career. I’ve always just kind of let it happen. Whatever happens, happens. But I see it. I do see it.”

Meanwhile, Williams dominated the decade, on the court and in conversation.

There were, to begin with, the dozen Grand Slam single titles—no other woman had

more than three over the past 10 seasons—and the 3 1/2 years in a row at No. 1 in the WTA rankings.

And then there was the celebrity status that transcended tennis, making everything she did and said newsworthy, whether it was the triumphs and trophies and fashion statements or the disputes with tournament officials, the magazine covers or the Super Bowl ad with a message about women’s power, the birth of her daughter or the health scare that followed.

Still winning matches and reaching Grand Slam finals into her late 30s, still mattering

as much as ever, Williams was selected by The Associated Press as the Female Athlete of the Decade on Saturday after a vote by AP member sports editors and AP beat writers.

The AP Male Athlete of the Decade will be announced Sunday.

“When the history books are written, it could be that the great Serena Williams is the greatest athlete of all time. ... I like to call it the ‘Serena Superpowers’—that champion’s mindset. Irrespective of the adversity and the odds that are facing her, she always believes in herself,” said Stacey Allaster, CEO of the WTA from

2009-15 and now chief executive for professional tennis at the U.S. Tennis Association, which runs the U.S. Open.

“Whether it was health issues; coming back; having a child; almost dying from that—she has endured it all and she is still in championship form,” Allaster said. “Her records speak for themselves.”

Gymnast Simone Biles, the 2019 AP Female Athlete of the Year, finished second to Williams in voting for the decade honor, followed by swimmer Katie Ledecky. Two ski racers were next, with Lindsey Vonn finishing fourth and Mikaela Shiffrin fifth.



LOS ANGELES (AP)—LeBron James became the ninth player in NBA history to reach 9,000 assists and Anthony Davis scored 23 points as the Los Angeles Lakers defeated the Dallas Mavericks 108-95 on Sunday night.

James—who turns 35 on Monday—reached the milestone with 4:35 remaining in the first quarter when he fired an outlet pass to Davis three-quarters of the way down the court for a dunk. It was one of 13 assists on the night for James as he finished with 13 points.

Davis was 8 of 12 from the field in his 26th game this season with 20 or more points. Kentavious Caldwell-Pope

LeBron reaches milestone as Lakers beat Mavs

added a season-high 19 points, including four 3-pointers, and Dwight Howard scored 15. All of Howard’s points came in the second quarter.

Luka Doncic led Dallas with 19 points but struggled from the field one night after recording his ninth triple-double of the season. The second-year guard shot 5 of 14 and missed all six of his 3-point attempts. Delon Wright came off the bench to score 14.

Thunder 98, Raptors 97

In Toronto, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander matched his career-high with 32 points, Chris Paul had 25 points, 11 rebounds and eight assists and Okla-

homa City beat Toronto for its sixth win in seven games.

Nerlens Noel added 13 points and Darius Bazley had 11 to help the Thunder win their fifth straight in Toronto. Oklahoma City has won 11 of 15 overall.

Kyle Lowry and Fred VanVleet each scored 20 points and Serge Ibaka had 12 points and 14 rebounds for the Raptors. They lost for the third time in four games.

Gilgeous-Alexander made the go-ahead basket on a jump shot with 36 seconds left in the fourth quarter, then grabbed the rebound on a missed 3-pointer by VanVleet. The third-year guard, who was born in Toronto and raised in

nearby Hamilton, has scored 32 points three times in his past five games.

Pelicans 127, Rockets 112

In New Orleans, Lonzo Ball highlighted a season-high 27-point performance with a career-high seven 3-pointers and the Pelicans beat undermanned Houston for their fourth straight victory.

Brandon Ingram also had 27 points and Jrue Holiday and E’Twaun Moore each added 25, with Moore setting a career high.

Houston played without James Harden (sprained toe), Russell Westbrook (rest) and Clint Capela (bruised heel).

Daniel House Jr. scored 22 points for Houston and Eric Gordon, returning for the first time since having arthroscopic surgery on his right knee in mid-November, added 20 points.

Nuggets 120, Kings 115

In Denver, Michael Porter Jr. found out just before the opening tip he was getting his first career start. The rookie wasted little time making an impact.

Porter scored a career-high 19 points while filling in for injured Gary Harris to help the Denver Nuggets hold off the skidding Sacramento Kings.

Will Barton also scored 19 points, including two free

throws with eight seconds left on another night when Denver nearly lost a big lead in the fourth quarter.

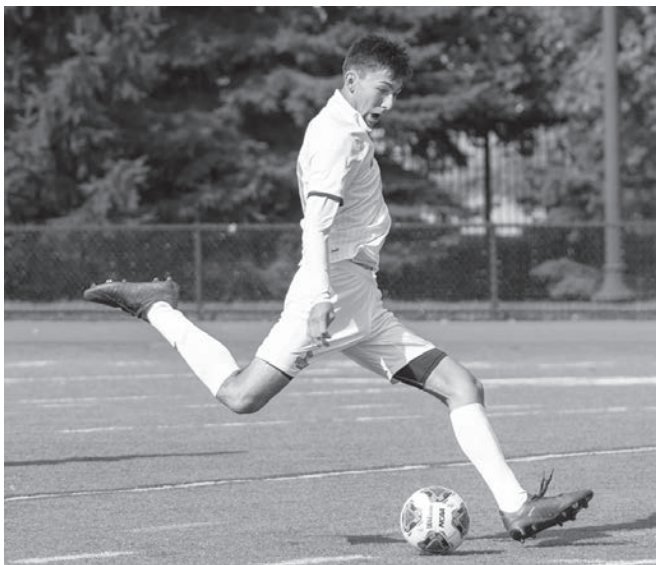
“We got the stops we needed and got to the free throw line,” Jamal Murray said.

Grizzlies 117, Hornets 104

In Memphis, Dillon Brooks scored 20 points, rookie Brandon Clarke added 18 and the Grizzlies sent Charlotte to its fifth straight loss.

Jonas Valanciunas scored 16 points, and Jaren Jackson Jr. added 14 points and 12 rebounds for Memphis. Malik Monk led Charlotte with 18 points off the bench and provided a fourth-quarter boost that pulled the Hornets within single-digits. Devonte’ Graham had 16 points and 10 assists.

Tenorio, Heras stand out in rookie season



Soccer's Sunjoon Tenorio and tennis' Isabel Heras did not simply earn slots on their respective collegiate teams, but were also impressive in their freshman year. Heras got the All-Rocky

Mountain Athletic Conference Freshman of the Year honors while playing for Dixie State University in NCAA Division II and also made it to the First Team All-



6 RMAC Doubles. Tenorio, on the other hand, played his first season with Suffolk University—an NCAA Division III school and was named

Rookie of the Year and MVP of the Rams. He made history for Suffolk for winning three straight Rookie of the Week awards from the Great North-east Athletic Conference.

No govt funding for NMSA

Still reeling from the damage brought by two super typhoons to the facilities it manages, the Northern Marianas Sports Association took another hit when it did not receive allocation from the government for the fiscal year 2019.

NMSA uses the funding it gets from the government since 2014 for employees payroll and operations, while the money it collects from its lottery program are allotted for CNMI athletes and officials' participation to off-island tournaments.

Despite the absence of government funding, NMSA still manages the Oleai Sports Complex and its fa-

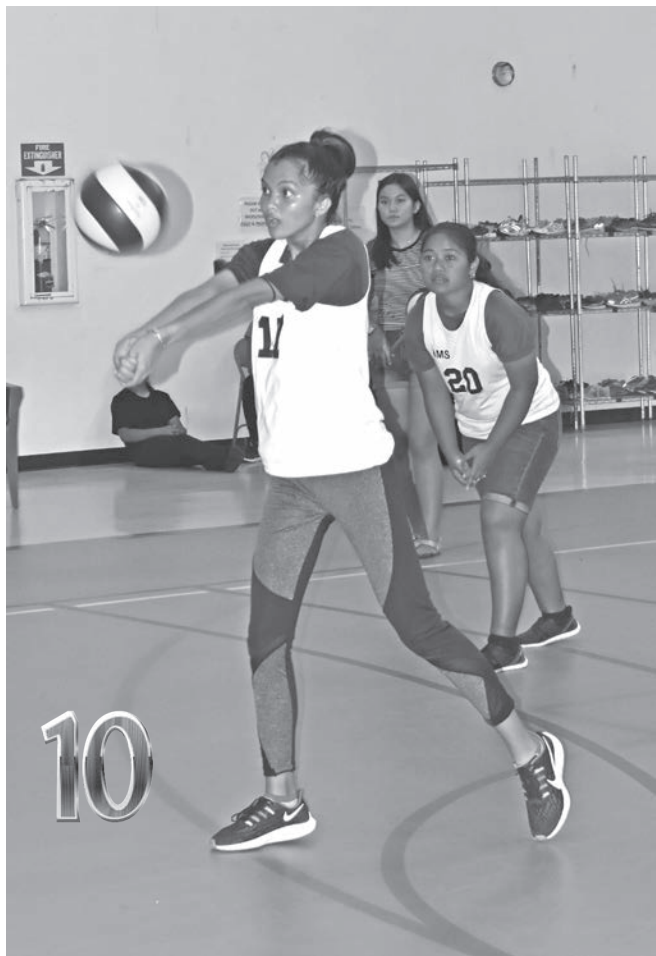


CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The Northern Marianas Sports Association-managed Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium is still waiting for repairs.

cilities, but with limited manpower just not to disrupt ongoing competitions.

NMSA is also waiting for the long-delayed repair work at the complex, which will be the main hub of the 2021 Pacific Mini Games. A proposal for more improvement at the facility has been submitted, but nothing is definite yet.

Busy season for interscholastic competition



After the cancelation of various tournaments due to Super Typhoon Yutu, the Public School System Student Support System Athletic Department headed by Nick Gross had its hands full at the start of the year.

Interscholastic sports competition was in full swing, as almost every month, starting in February, PSS was able to hold tournaments.

It started with the 4x4 grass

volleyball tournament for middle school boys and girls and went on to hold co-ed 4x4 basketball for elementary; 3x3 basketball and canoe racing for high school; athletics championships for all levels; cross country; elementary and middle school soccer; elementary and middle school volleyball, and high school basketball. Public and private schools competed together.

Sports tourism stays afloat

After being shelved last year due to Super Typhoon Yutu, the Hell of Marianas Century Cycle Race returned on Saipan roads and drew 127 competitors from 11 countries.

Bikers from Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, China, Australia, Slovakia, and Taiwan joined the event co-organized by the NMI Cycling Federation and the Marianas Visitors Authority to promote the CNMI as sports haven for tourists.

Two other signature events on island—Saipan Marathon

9 and Tagaman Triathlon—had athletes from other countries competing here. Over 800 joined Saipan Marathon with more than half were off-island participants, while the 30th edition Tagaman drew over 100 triathletes, including its pioneers.



Sapong, Gross bring honors to NMI

Northern Marianas Athletics' Robin Sapong and Nick Gross brought honors to the CNMI.

Sapong, after receiving the prestigious International Association of Athletics Federations Veteran Pin during the 52nd IAAF Congress at the Qatar National Convention Centre in Doha in September, was voted president of the Oceania Athletics Association early

7 this month. The NMA secretary general got the IAAF recognition for his service to the sport for more than two decades, while he is the first official from the CNMI to get elected as OAA president.

Gross, a many-time medalist in the Micronesian Games, competed in the 20th Oceania Masters Athletics Championships in Australia and struck gold in the javelin throw.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The CNMI's Nick Gross is flanked by two Australian athletes on the medal podium during the awards presentation for the men's 40 to 44 javelin throw event in the 20th Oceania Masters Athletics Championships in Queensland, Australia.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Northern Marianas Athletics general secretary Robin Sapong, right, poses with International Association of Athletics Federations president Lord Sebastian Coe of the United Kingdom after receiving the IAAF Veteran Pin during the 52nd IAAF Congress at Qatar National Convention Centre in Doha.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Bikers line up as they head to the Kingfisher Golf Links road.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
A Hopwood Middle School 2 player bumps the ball during their finals game against Hopwood 1 in the 2019-2020 Public School System Interscholastic Girls Volleyball League at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Back-to-back in Marianas Cup

2 The CNMI Women's National Team proved that its 2018 win over rival Guam in the revived Marianas Cup was no fluke after cruising to a 3-0 victory in this year's edition of the tournament.

After a close 3-2 triumph in the 2018 competition hosted at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville, the Commonwealth bets this time humiliated Guam at its home soil with the shutout win. Gianna Griffin scored a pair of goals for CNMI's back-to-back victory and was named MVP, while Guine Borja delivered the other goal.

Guam, after the sorry loss in the women's game, redeemed itself in the men's match after outclassing the CNMI, 6-2.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
CNMI players celebrate after beating Guam, 3-0, in the 2019 Marianas Cup.

Pacific Mini Games: To host or not



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Pacific Games Council officials join Northern Marianas Sports Association officers and the CNMI lawmakers for a group photo after a brief meeting regarding Saipan's hosting of the 2021 Pacific Mini Games.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, in March, pulled the plugged on the CNMI's hosting of the

2021 Pacific Mini Games to focus on the continued recovery and rebuilding efforts from

Super Typhoon Yutu that hit the islands late last year.

Two months later and after talking with all the stakeholders, Torres had a change of heart and gave the Mini

Games a go provided that the Pacific Games Council will take into consideration the Commonwealth's ability to finance the hosting of the event.

It was then agreed upon that the budget for the Mini Games will be sliced to \$3 million from \$8 million and from 12 sports, only six will be contested.

Though the CNMI has reaffirmed its commitment to host the Mini Games, the addendum to the 2014 contract has yet to be signed.

TENACIOUS

From Page 28

plement the performance of their No. 1 player.

As for the women's team, Lee also had a breather from competing in the ITF Juniors World Tour, while Heras came home from a successful rookie season in the NCAA to don the colors of the CNMI. Tan and Miyawaki diligently trained on island with Race while also doing other sports.

The quartet got into a tough draw in the team event, facing PNG, which was led by the Pacific's No. 1 player and Women's Tennis Association veteran Abigail Tere-Apisah, and home bet Samoa. Lee and company lost, but not without giving their foes a good fight. The CNMI's female players also did well in the singles, doubles, and mixed doubles events the following week, winning over players that a couple of years ago would have given them a beating, according to Race.

Lee made it to the quarterfinals in the singles event only to be paired with Tere-Apisah

in the Last 8, while Heras also reached the same round. In the doubles, Heras and Lee also barged into the Round of 8.

Despite the heartbreaker in the singles and women's doubles and playing multiple games in one day, Lee kept her focus as she was determined to bring something home. The Pacific's No. 1 junior player was with Sinclair in the mixed doubles and she moved a win away from getting a medal when the CNMI duo won over Cook Islands' Brett Baudinet and Tamara Anderson in their semis match in the morning (last July 20).

In the afternoon of the same day, Lee and Sinclair returned to the court for the gold medal match against Tere-Apisah and Matthew Stubbings and the former seemed headed for another heartache when the PNG pair raced to a 3-0 lead and nearly finished off the CNMI duo after taking a 6-5 advantage in the super-tiebreaker third set. However, Lee and Sinclair persevered and capped the Commonwealth's outstanding showing in Samoa with a come-from-behind 10-8 victory.

Swimmers' unsinkable spirit

Despite the absence of an appropriate facility, CNMI swimmers persevered, as they continued to train and even competed in off-island tournaments this year.

Nearly six months after the closure (October 2018) of the former Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi, members of the Saipan Swim Club and Swimming Center Tsunami Saipan competed in the Inaugural Micronesian Swim-

ming Championships in Palau. Tsunami Saipan brought home 39 gold medals and a handful of silvers and bronze, while SSC gained one gold, 10 silvers, and six bronzes.

Members of both swim groups also represented the CNMI to the 2019 Pacific Games in Samoa (ocean swim) and 18th FINA World Swimming Championships in Gwangju, South Korea.



Carol goes out with a bang

3 Carol Lee had her final year in the ITF Juniors World Tour and she made sure it will be a memorable one.

She won two singles championship and made historic appearances for the CNMI in two prestigious competitions.

The 18-year-old topped the ITF/CAT North African Circuit in Casablanca, Morocco in March after stunning No. 1 seed Aubane Droguet of France in the finals. Lee's other singles crown came from the South Pacific Open Junior Championships held in

Fiji in June.

With her pair of singles championships, the Commonwealth player reached her highest world ranking (No. 114).

Lee also became the first player from the CNMI to compete in the main draw of the Australian Open Juniors in January and the US Open in September.

After her impressive junior tennis career that saw her won a gold medal for the CNMI in the 2019 Pacific Games in Samoa, Lee is bound for college and will be suiting up for an NCAA Division I team.



LYDIA TAN
Carol Lee in action in the US Open Juniors in New York.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Isaiah Aleksenko won multiple gold medals in the Inaugural Micronesian Swimming Championships in Palau.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Jinju Thompson receives a medal after the ocean swim event in the Inaugural Micronesian Swimming Championships in Palau.



Dolphins
send Patriots
to wild-card game

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LeBron,
Serena named
Athletes of
the Decade

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Tenacious tennis team

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

For nearly two weeks, the CNMI National Tennis Team played multiple games in a day and battled its way through fatigue, mounting pressure, and highly competitive squads to earn a historic feat in the 2019 Pacific Games in Samoa.

Coach Jeff Race, assistant coach Lydia Tan, and players Colin Sinclair, Ken Song, Robbie Schorr, Carol Lee, Tania Tan, Isabel Heras, and Malika Miyawaki brought home three gold medals and a silver. It was the most golds the Commonwealth got from the Pacific Games since it first joined the quadrennial event four decades ago (1979). The group topped the men's team event, men's singles, and mixed doubles competition and finished second in the men's doubles, putting the CNMI in good standing in the medal tally after coming home empty handed from the Pacific Games in Papua New

Guinea four years ago. This year in Samoa, the men's squad was one man down after Bobby Cruz was forced to miss the off-island trip when his passport got stolen a day before the team left for the Pacific Games. Sinclair, who took a break from his ITF World Tour campaign, held the fort for the CNMI with his near-perfect games, while the youthful Schorr and Song showed stability and maturity that can be compared to seasoned veterans to com-

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Colin Sinclair led the CNMI's success in the tennis competition in the 2019 Pacific Games in Samoa.



ROSELYN MONROYO
Carol Lee teamed up with Colin Sinclair in winning the gold medal in the mixed doubles event of the 2019 Pacific Games in Samoa.



LYDIA TAN

From Left, Colin Sinclair, Ken Song, Robby Schorr, and head coach Jeff Race pose with their gold medals.

LYDIA TAN

From left, Carol Lee, Isabel Heras, Tania Tan, and Malika Miyawaki gather for a group photo before playing against Papua New Guinea.

